CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A STUDY OF ESL AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL IN SRI LANKA

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by

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ABSTRACT

An investigation into the communication problem of advanced learners of ESL in Sri Lanka is discussed. In spite of large scale educational ability, students at the tertiary level do not achieve adequate communicative competence in the SL. It is hypothesized that,

1. in order to possess communicative competence, it is necessary to possess both linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

2. Since sociolinguistic competence is closely related to socio-cultural awareness, increasing socio-cultural awareness will lead to improved communicative competence via improved sociolinguistic competence.

The relationship between culture, cultural awareness, sociolinguistic competence and communicative competence is examined and the possibilities for applying these concepts in ESL pedagogy are considered. Teaching materials designed applying the concepts of cultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence are described. The experimental teaching materials are used to teach a group of intermediate/advanced learners, who are undergraduates at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. The observations made during the experimental classes are presented and the teaching materials evaluated on the basis of these observations and research findings in relevant theoretical areas. A pre test post test design is used to compare the performance of the experimental subjects before and after treatment and their performance is compared with that of a control group.

The findings of the investigation indicate that the lack of sociolinguistic competence is responsible to a considerable degree for the lack of communicative competence, even though the results of the tests did not reach statistical significance.

Therefore, it is posited that there is an important relationship between the lack of sociolinguistic competence and the lack of communicative competence, and that the assumption underlying the proposed remedy that increased socio-cultural awareness leads to increased communicative competence is tenable, but that the research design needs modification.

Suggestions are made for revising the teaching material on the basis of the insights gained from the experiment and from relevant findings reported in the areas of schema theory, discourse analysis and pragmatics. Examples of revised materials are presented.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself
and that the work involved is entirely my own.

Antoinette T. Fernando

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On looking back a hundred years at the history of language learning and teaching, it is possible to see the sort of changes that have taken place in theories, methods and techniques and also in the whole outlook and attitude towards language learning and teaching; language teachers and learners. Though these changes have been going on for a considerable length of time, the past two decades have seen some of the major developments in the field of language learning and teaching. Second (including foreign) language learning has been the focus of much interest; of a great deal of theoretical and empirical research.

Much of this development can be associated with certain milestones in theories and research concerned with language such as the behaviouristic theory (Skinner 1957), the interlanguage hypothesis (Corder 1967, Selinker 1969), transformational generative theory (Chomsky 1965) and communicative competence theory (Hymes 1966). Of these, one theory that has led to major developments in the field of second language and foreign language research (SL and FL hereafter), is Hymes' theory of communicative competence (CC hereafter).

One of the most interesting areas of research that is relevant to SL and FL that can trace its development back to CC theory, is the area of sociolinguistic rules of use and the relationship of these rules to socio-cultural features underlying particular languages. Hymes (1964, 1967, 1972, 1973), Gumperz (1972), Ervin-Tripp (1972, 1977) and Schegloff (1972a, 1972b) are among the researchers who have pioneered research in this area. The importance of sociolinguistic rules of use in the field of SL/FL language learning has stemmed from research in the sociolinguistic rules of use and the ethnography of speaking. A vast amount of research has been undertaken in Britain, the USA and elsewhere. This research has gone on to illustrate the relationship between cultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence and in turn cultural awareness and CC.

This thesis discusses the relationship between cultural awareness (CA hereafter) and CC in language learning in relation to a specific context of investigation: English as a Second Language (ESL hereafter) at the tertiary level

in Sri Lanka.

1.1. The Need for Investigating Tertiary Level ESL in Sri Lanka

In her work with ESL learners at the tertiary level, at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, the writer has had the sort of frustrating experience shared with others in many countries involved in the field of ESL. This is finding that ESL learners who have followed English classes both at school and at university and in fact passed certain proficiency examinations are still unable to use the language appropriately in spoken interaction or in written communication: that they are lacking in communicative competence (Hymes 1967, 1972).

Just as this experience is frustrating for the teacher, it is also depressing for the learner. It is a fact that, it is not only very weak students who encounter this difficulty. Students who are punctual, conscientious, take their English classes very seriously and who score fairly high on grammar, vocabulary and comprehension tests, nevertheless find it equally difficult to use the language effectively for interaction and communication. In the case of weaker learners, and those who are not sufficiently motivated, the lack of lower level grammar and vocabulary itself could be regarded as the impeding factor. But in the case of more advanced learners, this could not be considered the chief cause.

Unlike in EFL situations, English plays an important role in both international and intranational affairs in ESL situations. Because of the dependence of the economy on export and tourism, English plays a very important role in Sri Lanka in the areas of business and administration. It is also important in the areas of law and education and the mass media. At the present time with English moving towards being given the status of a national language, the importance of the role of English in the country is growing. At the tertiary level, the English programme is called upon to provide not only the academic reading needs of the undergraduates but also to remedy the gaps in the English teaching these learners have received at school and to prepare them for using English in professions and services at the end of their university career. At present, employers such as banks and corporations have to provide special English proficiency courses for the employees they recruit, in order to enable them to use English in these employment situations. The universities

are called upon to provide these extra courses. Since most of the teachers and the professional groups are recruited from the graduate population, it becomes a necessary part of university education to provide the type of ESL programme that would most benefit these future teachers and professional groups. In Sri Lanka, the motives of the learners for learning English and the motives of the authorities for providing an ESL programme could be considered instrumental. But unlike in some other ESL situations, the instrumental motives do not restrict the type of English used, to referential English, as eligibility for employment and for career advancement is heavily dependent on the mastery of interactive communicative English, as discussed in 2.5.4.3.1. Therefore, it becomes necessary to think of English at the tertiary level in CC terms rather than in purely referential ones.

Because the success of the university career of these ESL learners and their future well being is to a considerable extent dependent on the success of the English teaching programme, it is necessary to investigate why the English classes provided for these learners are not successful in preparing them to cope with actual use of the SL, even after a considerable period of teaching. In other words, it is necessary to investigate what is lacking in ESL courses, which do not prepare learners for actually using the language.

Apart from the necessity to cater to national needs and the pedagogical interest of this subject, it is also of interest from the point of view of the learners themselves. The learners' complaints and criticisms against existing ESL courses are based on these very grounds. For though being unable to read reference material in English is a serious problem, and ESL courses are not particularly successful in solving this problem either, it is seldom that one hears learners complaining about ESL courses on account of this. When a learner complains that an ESL course does not teach him/her to understand what s/he hears/sees or that it does not teach her/him to speak the language, s/he is in effect saying that, the course does not teach him/her to use the language for interaction and communication.

In order to diagnose the causes for this very serious shortcoming in ESL courses in Sri Lanka, and in order to discover methods by which this shortcoming may be remedied, it was desirable to undertake the investigation outlined in this chapter.

1.2. The Aims of the Investigation

1.2.1. The Means by which Communicative Competence can be Achieved:

One of the primary aims of this study is to find out the means by which CC can be achieved in a non-native context, where English is taught as a SL. As will be discussed in detail in 4.1. Second Language Development research provides several possible explanations which could be applied to the communication problems of ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. The acquisition poor environment and the classroom not facilitating acquisition (Krashen 1981 and elsewhere), lack of provision for cultivating unanalyzed knowledge and the primary processes (Ellis 1984), not being satisfactorily able to promote automaticity and processing control (Bialystok 1982, Bialystok and Sharwood Smith 1985), insufficient development of the vernacular style (Tarone 1982) and the insufficient emphasis on the development of capacity (Widdowson 1983, 1984) are some of the SLD explanations that could be applied to the Sri Lankan situation. What this diversity of explanations point out is the complexity of the problem. While providing a good deal of insight into the problem, these explanations still do not provide a complete answer. This thesis attempts to investigate yet another factor that may be partly responsible for the problem.

In ESL teaching in Sri Lanka as in many other ESL/EFL situations, emphasis is often placed on teaching the rules of grammar. It is believed that teaching the various grammatical structures and building up the learners' vocabulary would result in proficiency in the language. The 'rules of use' -the sociolinguistic rules and conventions of the language- do not come into the picture at all. Lack of proficiency is attributed to the lack of grammar and the lack of vocabulary. However, since learners who do know a great deal of grammar and have a considerable vocabulary, are still not in possession of any remarkable degree of CC, the question arises whether the neglected sociolinguistic aspect may not have something to do with it. Tarone's SLD style continuum theory discussed in 4.2.2 deals with this aspect to some extent. Since the rules of use could override the rules of grammar in importance when it comes to social interaction and communication, it is important

1. to find out whether neglecting the sociolinguistic

component of CC has contributed to this problem, and if so,

2. ways and means to remedy this neglect.

1.2.2. Arguments in Favour of Teaching the Sociolinguistic Rules of Use:

If neglecting the sociolinguistic rules of use is responsible for the poor level of CC of these learners, the obvious solution would be to include this component in ESL courses. Even though it could be argued that it is not productive to teach the sociolinguistic conventions of the native speaker to ESL learners because of the difference in socio-cultural background, it is also possible to present counter arguments to demonstrate that this is not necessarily so.

A strong argument for teaching the rules of use of an accepted standard variety of the language is that ESL learners of the present day are not restricted to an intranational context, and should be equipped to take part in both intranational and international contexts of language use. Once again, objections may be raised on the grounds that few Sri Lankan ESL learners come into direct contact with native speakers of the language, and therefore, they are not called upon to conform to native speaker conventions of use in order to carry out meaningful interaction. What is often forgotten is the fact that international contexts may not be limited to interaction with native speakers of British or American English. 'International' retains its global meaning in relation to the use of English for communication, because of the role English plays in the lives of people belonging to different nations.

Also, ESL learners do have more opportunities than formerly of interacting with native speakers of English because of the expanding tourist industry, the existence of the free trade zone and because of the opportunities for work and study abroad. They also come into contact with speakers of other Englishes. If each group of speakers of nativized Englishes strictly adhered to indigenous norms and conventions, their distinctive varieties of English would be mutually unintelligible, the same as their mother tongues (MT hereafter). Sociolinguistic conventions of a standard variety are therefore just as necessary for mutual intelligibility, to avoid misunderstanding and to build rapport.

On the other hand, the need for sociolinguistic competence does not arise only in relation to speech situations. Sociolinguistic conventions also come

into reading, writing and listening. The lack of appropriate cultural schemata prevent proper comprehension and response to any type of text.

1.2.3. The Relationship between Socio-cultural Awareness and Communicative Competence:

Since the rules of use are largely dependent on the socio-cultural context of a language, this study investigates how far, creating an awareness of the socio-cultural context of the SL would contribute to the teaching of the sociolinguistic rules of use, which is an essential component of CC.

It is the social institutions, cultural events, historical happenings etc., that have given rise to sociolinguistic rules of use which could be regarded as a form of linguistic manifestation of underlying cultural values, presuppositions etc. It is the beliefs, the values, the prejudices etc. of the culture that underlies the language that come out in these socio-cultural awareness conventions of language use. Lacking awareness of these socio-cultural features is a serious handicap when it comes to using socio-cultural rules of use. CA makes sociolinguistic conventions meaningful in context. Unlike in the case of grammatical rules, explanations for the use of sociolinguistic conventions cannot be sought in grammars and lexicons, but only in schematic knowledge and actual use. Though it may be possible to 'know' a sociolinguistic convention in the same way as a grammatical rule or a lexical item, this does not necessarily entail the ability to use it appropriately. Unlike in the case of grammatical rules, appropriate use of sociolinguistic conventions becomes possible only if the user is aware of why, where, when, with whom, in what situation it could be used. This information is provided by CA.

1.3. Definition of Terms

Some of the terms used in the course of this thesis have acquired various different meanings and have been interpreted differently by different writers and researchers, and therefore need to be clarified.

1.3.1. Communicative Competence:

As discussed at length in Chapter 3, CC means different things to different people according to whether they view the term from a behavioural or cognitive perspective; whether they are sociolinguists or psychologists; SL

teachers or FL teachers and so on.

The term 'competence' in relation to CC, linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence is not used in the sense where it is restricted to a analytic or descriptive meaning indicating merely underlying knowledge, as it is used by Chomsky (1965) and Widdowson (1983) among others. In this study the term is used in the way it is defined by Hymes (1966): as the native speaker's knowledge and ability to use both the linguistic and sociolinguistic rules and conventions of his/her language appropriately; the knowledge and the ability to know what to say, whom to say it to, and in what situation and in what manner.

CC can thus be summarized as:

1. knowledge of the language system (linguistic or grammatical knowledge)
2. accessibility to the culture specific schemata of the language and knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions
3. ability to use knowledge of the language system
4. ability to instantiate schemata and to use the knowledge of the conventions of the language

1.3.2. Sociolinguistic/Socio-cultural Competence:

This term too needs to be defined, because like CC, this concept too has been described in different ways in the literature.

In the context of this study, sociolinguistic competence/socio-cultural competence is used, once more according to Hymes' definition. Apart from the rules of grammar (rules of morphology, syntax etc.), a native speaker of a language is also master of rules of appropriacy -rules of use and conventions. It is this aspect of a native speaker's competence that is defined as sociolinguistic or socio-cultural competence. Sociolinguistic competence then, is the ability to use the linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic manifestations of tacit socio-cultural knowledge as to why, when, how, where, with whom, in what manner language should be used. This component together with linguistic (grammatical) competence form CC.

1.3.3. Socio-cultural/Cultural Awareness:

The term cultural awareness (CA) in relation to the language use and CC of the native speaker, means a general awareness of the entire life style of the society in which the language is used; an awareness of the 'shared culture' of the society that cuts across regional, social class, educational and other sub-cultures.

1.3.4. Communicative Language Teaching and Teaching for Communicative Competence:

Teaching with the aim of developing the CC of the learners is sometimes defined as communicative language teaching, but since this term does not often amount to the same thing it is necessary to differentiate between these two terms.

In this study, the term communicative language teaching (also communicative syllabus design) is used in the way the term is generally used; to mean teaching learners to communicate, teaching in a communicative environment, teaching which involves communicative activities, problem solving activities and so on.

Teaching for CC/teaching to improve, to increase CC, is used to mean that the goal of the teaching programme is to develop both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence of the learners, to improve both linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge and to develop the skills that make it possible to use this knowledge.

1.3.5. English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language:

During the course of the thesis, these two terms; English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are used as alternatives. Second language and foreign language in this context also need to be defined, because the term SL can be used to mean slightly different things.

In this study, ESL is used in relation to contexts such as Sri Lanka, India and Malaysia, where English serves both intranational and international purposes. Apart from being a language used for communication with people outside Sri Lanka, it is also used in such areas as education, administration, the domains of

family and friendship and in journalism and entertainment within the country.

By EFL situations are meant those situations where English is used for communication with the outside world and for restricted purposes such as in particular areas in higher education (e.g. medicine) within the country, but is not widely used as a medium of communication within the country, and is specifically not used in family/friendship domains (e.g. Japan, Iran and Thailand).

1.3.6. The Standard Language:

Since there is a great deal of controversy as to whether there is such a thing as 'Standard English', the use of the term 'standard' in relation to the English language in this thesis also needs to be explained.

What is meant by standard here, is a standard grammar such as the Quirk Grammar and the standard sociolinguistic conventions of British English (BE), which cut across dialectal, regional and other barriers. Greeting conventions, apology conventions, conventional ways of rebuking, complimenting etc. can be regarded as belonging to this category. 'Standard' as referring to a standard pronunciation such as RP, is not meant by the use of the term in this study.

1.3.7. Second Language Development:

This term is adopted from Ellis (1984) and includes improvement brought about both by learning and acquisition. The term Second Language Development (SLD) is used in preference to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in order to indicate that the role of the processes of learning and acquisition are not regarded as separate and distinctive as in Krashen (1981 and elsewhere).

1.4. The Propositions Underlying the Study

1. In spite of the language being taught for 7-9 years at school and continuing to be taught at the university, most ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka (even the more advanced learners) have a very low level of CC.

2. Some of the literature on CC seems to indicate that CC is a highly idealized abstract concept, and as such not a realistic goal in SL teaching. Some educationists and ESL/EFL specialists have watered down the concept of CC to suit

ESL/EFL situations, and in doing so, have done away with important features such as appropriacy and accuracy. This situation has arisen because CC is regarded as a static abstract idealized concept. On the contrary, there is evidence to indicate that CC is a continuum, rather than a fixed point of perfection (discussed in Chapter 3). As such, CC is not an impossible goal for ESL/EFL learners.

3. According to the present socio-economic situation in Sri Lanka, it is desirable for Sri Lankans to be multilingual, or at least bilingual. In order to be a successful bilingual/multilingual, it is necessary to be able to use not only the grammar and vocabulary of the SL/FL, but also its sociolinguistic rules and conventions with a high degree of accuracy. In order to use sociolinguistic conventions satisfactorily, it is also necessary to be aware of the socio-cultural background of the SL/FL in order to understand and to use the sociolinguistic rules and conventions of the SL/FL.

4. Though the sociolinguistic rules and conventions of use, can be regarded as acquired rather than taught/learnt, some SLD research seems to indicate that these can be taught/learnt.

5. The support provided by modern psychological evidence to the 'traditional' notion that conscious teaching of abstract rules of grammar is favourable for developing competence in the case of adult learners (McLaughlin et. al. 1983:157) indicates the possibility of considering this proposition in relation to sociolinguistic conventions. Given the predilection of adult students to be told why something happens the way it does, it is reasonable to suppose that a satisfactory way to set about teaching sociolinguistic conventions would be by teaching them the 'whys and wherefores'; teaching them about the language, in addition to teaching the 'what' of the language. Therefore, a possible way of teaching sociolinguistic rules and conventions would be to teach *about* the language (the how and why of language knowledge) at the same time as teaching *the* language (the what of language knowledge).

6. Teaching about the language involves conveying an awareness as to why the language is used the way it is rather than explaining the way in which the language operates grammatically, morphologically and syntactically. Language is often used the way it is not because the grammatical rules dictate that language should be used in this manner, but because the socio-cultural conventions specify such a need. The imperative in English is a case in point. Though the purpose of the imperative in grammatical terms is to command, because of the intervention of socio-cultural norms of politeness, power and solidarity, imperatives are hardly used for this purpose in everyday usage.

7. Thus, conveying some awareness of the socio-cultural background of the language should be an integral part of teaching about the language. This would pinpoint the similarities and the differences in the sociolinguistic rules of use in the learners' MT and the SL, and in this way build up the right kind of attitude towards the SL, and the socio-cultural features it embodies.

8. Since sociolinguistic competence includes both schematic knowledge and the knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions and the ability to use this knowledge in interaction and communication, improving the ability to use sociolinguistic knowledge by skill development through exposure and practice should form an integral part of the teaching programme.

9. Though sociolinguistic knowledge in the case of the native speaker is acquired in the same way as grammatical knowledge through exposure and use, conscious teaching is not entirely absent from the acquisition process of sociolinguistic knowledge of native speakers (see 4.3.2.3). In the case of ESL learners living in acquisition poor environments, conscious teaching of sociolinguistic conventions is essential. While employing conscious teaching to convey CA and sociolinguistic knowledge, it is also possible and necessary to encourage unconscious assimilation -acquisition- as far as possible.

10. Teaching the socio-cultural conventions on which the rules of use of the SL are based, need not lead to a conflict of socio-cultural values as long as the learner is made aware, that the purpose of the exercise is to make him/her communicatively competent in the SL, and not to impose a different set of socio- cultural norms and values on her/him.

1.5. The Empirical Investigation

The hypotheses on which the empirical investigation is based given below, result from considering the above propositions in relation to the theoretical concepts of CC and CA in relation to ESL in Sri Lanka.

1.5.1. The General Hypotheses:

The general hypotheses on which the investigation is based are:

1. On the assumption that linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence are both essential for CC, where the subjects are already in possession of some degree of linguistic competence, increased sociolinguistic competence would result in increased CC.

2. On the assumption that sociolinguistic competence is closely related to socio-cultural features underlying a language, making learners of a SL/FL aware of the socio-cultural features underlying the SL/FL and teaching them the sociolinguistic conventions of the SL should result in an increase of sociolinguistic competence, thus increasing the learners' CC, discussed in chapter 4.

1.5.2. The Specific Areas of Investigation:

The specific areas of investigation in relation to the general hypotheses outlined above are:

1. how far the unsatisfactory level of CC of the ESL learners in Sri Lanka is linked to the unsatisfactory level of sociolinguistic competence and in turn to insufficient socio-cultural awareness of the SL

2. whether and to what degree the concept of CA in relation to sociolinguistic competence can be applied in ESL pedagogy, in designing teaching materials

3. the place of conscious and unconscious teaching of sociolinguistic conventions in order to increase sociolinguistic competence

4. the suitability of materials developed on the basis of the theoretical constructs of CA and CC, for the specific ESL situation under consideration: ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka.

It is hypothesized that the teaching experiment would reveal the importance of sociolinguistic competence in relation to CC, and that learners taught using teaching materials designed to increase sociolinguistic competence through CA would show evidence of a higher degree of sociolinguistic competence, and consequently a higher degree of CC, than the control group not subjected to special treatment.

1.5.3. Methods of Investigation:

The investigation following a pre test post test design was carried out in five stages. The five stages are as follows:

Stage 1 - The development of the teaching materials
Stage 2 - The pre test

Stage 3 - The teaching experiment
Stage 4 - The post test
Stage 5 - The revision of a sample set of teaching materials

A test of CC designed by Bachman and Palmer (1982:449-465) modified by the researcher to suit the Sri Lankan context was the instrument used for the second and fourth stages of the investigation. A set of teaching materials designed by the researcher using the theoretical concepts and the teaching methods and techniques discussed in Chapter 4, was the instrument used for the third stage of the investigation. A sample set of the materials used during the third stage, were revised during the fifth stage on the basis of findings made during the third stage and on the basis of relevant research findings in related research areas.

1.5.4. The Subjects:

The subjects who took part in the study were undergraduate students from the faculties of arts and law of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1.6. The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis contains eight chapters in all. In this chapter the subject of the study is introduced, the propositions on which the study is based and the hypotheses tested during the course of the investigation are outlined.

In ***Chapter 2*** the specific ESL situation which is being investigated, the ESL situation in Sri Lanka with special reference to ESL at the tertiary level is discussed at length. The historical events which have led to the present situation, and how these historical events have affected the status of ESL today are outlined. This chapter also deals with the status of English in Sri Lanka today, its place in education -especially education at the tertiary level- and public life and the socio-economic factors that make English a valuable SL. The status of Sri Lankan English as a nativized variety is discussed with reference to the literature. In the final section of the chapter, ESL at the different levels of the educational system is briefly outlined and the ESL programme at the University of Colombo discussed at some length.

The theoretical background to the present investigation, the theory of CC and its effects on language teaching are the subjects dealt with in ***Chapter 3*** A review is made of the literature which records the development of the theory

after it was first introduced by Hymes in 1966. The way in which different groups of educationists have gone on to give different interpretations to the term CC depending on their particular area of interest, and how this has led to CC becoming an 'umbrella concept' is taken up in the penultimate section. In the final section, the impact CC theory has had on communicative language teaching and communicative syllabus design is discussed.

In ***Chapter 4*** the explanations from SLD theory that could be applied to the communication problems of the ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka are presented and the hypotheses examined in this thesis placed in context. The concept of culture is defined in relation to language and the relationship between socio-cultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence is discussed. The arguments for including culture material in language teaching and for the teaching of sociolinguistic conventions are outlined and discussed with reference to the literature. The problems in including culture material in language teaching courses and how these problems can be overcome are considered in the penultimate section of the chapter. In the final section, the type of material that should be included and the methods and techniques appropriate for teaching this material are presented.

Chapter 5 is devoted to providing details about the teaching materials constructed according to the theoretical constructs discussed in chapters 3 & 4 and used in the experiment described in chapter 6. The way in which the teaching materials apply the theoretical concept of CA is outlined with illustrations from the lesson units. The teaching materials are evaluated in relation to the classroom observations discussed in chapter 6 and in relation to research findings in the areas of schema theory, discourse analysis and pragmatics. The ways in which the materials could be improved are discussed in the penultimate section and examples of the revised materials presented in the final section.

Chapter 6 provides details of the empirical investigation. The subjects and instruments are described and details are given about the administration of the experiment. The results of the investigation are discussed in relation to the general and specific hypotheses. The experience gained from conducting the experiment is briefly outlined. The observations made during the different stages of the experiment, the problems encountered, and the insights gained are discussed in detail.

The wider implications of the results of the investigation in terms of ESL in Sri Lanka and suggestions for further research and development are the main themes of ***Chapter 7***.

In ***Chapter 8*** the theoretical concepts and the research findings are summarized, and the impact of the findings on the theoretical concepts is briefly outlined.

CHAPTER 2

THE PLACE OF ENGLISH IN SRI LANKA: IMPLICATIONS FOR TESL

2.1. Introduction:

The nature of the investigation that forms the body of this thesis has been outlined in Chapter 1. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the historical background and the current status of English in Sri Lanka and the relationship of these to TESL. Section 2.1 introduces the historical background which we regard as relevant to all aspects of English teaching in Sri Lanka. In section 2.2 the nativization process that has been taking place in the use of English in Sri Lanka and its implications for TESL in Sri Lanka are considered and the literature in this area briefly reviewed. In any decisions in relation to norms of correctness, the type of language that should be taught, the type of materials to be used, it is necessary to be aware of the nativization process. In second or foreign language teaching the situation of the society that the learners belong to is of the utmost importance. Features of this language situation in Sri Lanka -diglossia and bilingualism- are discussed in section 2.3. In section 2.4, research and ideas regarding the role of nativized English in relation to TESL are discussed. The present day TESL situation in Sri Lanka and the role of English at the universities is discussed (section 2.5) and problems encountered in TESL in Sri Lanka are outlined in section 2.6.

2.2. Background to the Present Day Status of English:

2.2.1. Introduction:

From the time English was first introduced with the arrival of the British in Sri Lanka in 1796, upto the present, language and society in Sri Lanka have undergone extensive changes. Within this period Sri Lanka has seen the demise of the last Sinhala kingdom, the adoption of an alien culture and way of life by a section of Sri Lankan society, the rise of a class liberated from the feudal caste associated occupations, the resurgence of nationalism and finally independence and its aftermath. Language has been linked in one way or another with most if not all these events. Though constant warfare and internal disharmony from the time of the Portuguese invasion in 1505 had left little room for the king and court to perform their role of guardians of the

indigenous religion and culture, the very existence of a Sinhala kingdom had contributed to keeping these alive. When the British arrived in Sri Lanka, Sri Lankans, especially in the maritime provinces were influenced to some degree by the culture and language of the Portuguese and the Dutch, but they had not arrived at a stage when an alien language and culture was to be regarded as superior to the local counterpart. For this is certainly what happened especially in the maritime provinces after the arrival of the British.

2.2.2. The Place of English Under British Colonial Rule:

The second half of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries saw the rise of a 'middle class' which had not existed before, whose distinguishing features were an English education, extensive use of the English language, and the adoption of an anglicized way of life (Fernando 1977, Kandiah 1979, De Silva 1972). The process by which English was established in Sri Lanka closely parallels that in India (Kachru 1969:630-633). The efforts of missionaries with the aim of proselytizing led to the establishment of English schools before the British government became involved in English education (ibid:631). On the other hand, what led to the rise of an educated middle class was the type of policy which was voiced in Macaulay's historic Minute of 1835, which introduced English education in India. In his Minute Macaulay said that English education would lead to the formation of

> 'a class of persons who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern- a class of person Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.'

This need existed in Sri Lanka as well, therefore the need to develop English education was recognized by British colonials. The problems and conflicts and the mixed attitudes towards English today can be traced back to this time. At this time the English language became the unifying symbol of an educationally, economically and culturally 'select' group, and long after independence these associations still remain.

English education was introduced by the British for the smooth running of the administrative machinery by providing a group of bilingual natives to fill the low ranking positions in government service to act as go-betweens when it came to dealings with the vast majority of monolinguals. This was welcomed

especially by caste groups who were able to transcend barriers to social advancement enacted by the caste system. English education opened up for them the possibility of moving away from a caste system which was restrictive (Fernando 1977:343). Apart from being able to rise above the inferior status that would have been theirs by virtue of belonging to particular castes in the feudal caste hierachy, they were able to assume superior status because of their English education and their westernized way of life.

When the island became independent, therefore it was understandable that most people in this group did not welcome the passing away of the colonial era with all the benefits that system brought them, to be replaced by a system which was endeavouring in a sense to go back to the former position by giving first place to the indigenous culture and language. It is also understandable that they would do everything possible to maintain their élite status by using the English language and their anglicized way of life as a shield to disassociate themselves from their original background which they had learned to despise. Since it was English education and their westernized way of life that provided their superior status, a sort of 'patriotism' towards both developed among the middle class group of Sri Lankans. This is similar to the attitude towards the conquerors language adopted by people in other colonial situations such as Imperial Russia and the Celtic countries (Baugh 1959:135-149). The indigenous culture and language were regarded as belonging to rustics or 'godayaas' as they were contemptuously termed.

2.2.3. The National Language Policy and its Effects on English:

2.2.3.1. The Change of Attitude Towards National Languages:

Upto the time of independence in 1948, then, English had been the medium of administration, higher education and commerce throughout the island, and had also been the medium of interaction among the middle class elite. The national languages were relegated to an inferior position, as being worthy only for interaction with peasants, servants and other inferiors (Fernando 1977:342). In 1948, the distinction between vernacular and non-vernacular schools were done away with, and soon afterwards the first steps were taken to implement the recommendations of the committee appointed to report on Sinhala and Tamil as official languages. This was followed by the National Language Policy in 1956[1], which made Sinhala the sole medium of administration with restricted

use of Tamil (De Silva 1969). Soon afterwards Sinhala and Tamil also became the medium of education at all levels. The 2500th anniversary of the birth of the Buddha which occurred at this time contributed in a big way to the upsurge of nationalist fervour, which aided the cause of Sinhala as the national language.

As it often happens in such cases the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. From regarding English as being a superior possession, public opinion changed to the point where English was regarded as being a threat to the national identity, and the English educated élite minority were feared and despised for the political powers they wielded and for the social position they had gained. As Hettiaratchi (1969:739) points out, the recommendations of the commission appointed to report on Sinhala and Tamil as official languages were implemented overnight, and considering the odds against which these recommendations were implemented, the results are noteworthy (ibid:739–41).

This then was the turning point in the development of Sinhala and Tamil as languages of national importance. Today not only are Sinhala and Tamil the major languages of administration and law, but they are also the medium of education in all schools and in most faculties of the universities. Faculties of engineering medicine and natural sciences are however still compelled to conduct some lectures and research in English.

2.2.3.2. The Resurgence of Sinhala:

Sinhala the main official language has also become the *lingua franca* among the majority of the people belonging to the different racial groups, as these groups tend to use Sinhala rather than English as the common medium of interaction. The situation among the professionals and highly educated groups however is somewhat different. For them English rather than Sinhala still continues to be the *lingua franca*. In spite of the limited resources available for developing such facilities, the number of newspapers and journals published in the national languages has increased considerably. There has also been great advancement in the fields of theatre, cinema and music. Since independence the number of creative writers writing in the national language have also increased. Though controversies regarding such issues as the divergence between the literary and the colloquial forms of Sinhala and the virtues of 'pure' as opposed to the 'mixed' variety of the language continue, on

the whole it would not be wrong to state that within a remarkably short time Sinhala the major national language has been raised to a linguistically 'healthy' state.

2.2.3.3. The Downward Slide of English Education:

The effect that this has had on English education is some cause for regret. This is due to the wrong attitude that resulted from the zealous concern for the national languages. To a nation trying to recover from the humiliation of being a subject race for so long all reminders of that period of domination are painful. Added to this there was the superiority exhibited by an elite class who benefited from this subjectivity and who made no secret of the fact that they were different as shown by their English education and their anglicized way of life. As might be expected English came to be regarded as being the badge of a group of people who were regarded as being 'marginal men'; renegades of the tribe. A special term 'sankara' was used in describing this anglicized group. Politicians, educationists and others fired with patriotism thus hastened to throw the baby away with the bathwater, thus leading to deterioration in English education.

Up to the time of the implementation of the National Language Policy, university education was limited to those who were fortunate enough to get an English education. Once the medium of instruction in both schools and universities changed to that of the national languages, a large number of students from rural areas, the majority of whom were monolinguals began to enter universities, from which they had hitherto been barred because of their lack of English. These students were understandably staunch supporters of the Sinhala/Tamil only policy. Learning English was not particularly encouraged and the gap between the English educated élite and the rest grew wider. Overtly, a knowledge of English was not regarded as important but covertly English still held quite an important place. The elite continued to remain an elite and in fact even more so, as children of upper middle class families continued to be educated in English in private schools and many of them were sent to British universities for higher education.

As Brodkey points out, covert friction between bilingual and monolingual students can be observed in the universities even at the present time (Brodkey 1974:161). Though professedly students from a monolingual rural background

denigrate the elite class, they do tend to be affected by a sense of insecurity and inferiority. This is heightened because apart from the social advantages the bilingual townies seem to enjoy, they are also at an advantage when it comes to studies, as they have access to reference material available only in English, while the monolingual students have to rely on books available in translation, which are very few.

The idealism and fervour with which the 'national language only' policy had been implemented seemed to wear off after some time and a reaction set in. Though grudgingly it had to be admitted that neglecting English education had not been a wise thing to do. Within the last decade or two steps have been taken to remedy the situation, but it is impossible to remedy years of neglect overnight.

2.2.3.4. Modern Developments Leading to the Reinstatement of English:

While Sinhala and Tamil continue to be the major languages of administration, law and education, English too has a role in these while at the same time playing a major role in the sphere of economics, commerce and banking. Recently there have been suggestions that English should be given the status of a national language(Hilton 1983:14) and recent developments indicate that these suggestions are being taken up. The expansion of the tourist industry has also led to a greater need for English proficiency. In recent years, the employment opportunities that have opened up for skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled workers in the Middle East and in the African continent, have also led to an open acknowledgement of the need to be proficient in English. Though there is nothing to prevent a monolingual speaker of Sinhala/Tamil who has the required qualifications from applying for any job s/he likes, it is common knowledge that without adequate proficiency in English it is not possible to get selected for the more prestigious jobs. Even for less prestigious jobs, of two candidates who have identical qualifications the one who has a higher proficiency in English is likely to be selected. For most jobs in the mercantile sector and for some jobs in the public sector a pass in English at the G.C.E (O.L) or a higher qualification is stipulated as a requirement. For career advancement in any area, English is essential as the De Lanerolle Commission report on English in Sri Lanka reveals ('A Place in the Sun' 1973).

In such a climate, it is not surprising that learning English has become a major pre-occupation among all potential employment seekers. The general feeling is, that the English provided in schools is not sufficient, and this has led to the mushrooming of private 'tutories' which offer English courses of every description even in remote parts of the island. Private tutories have become a booming business in recent years. The government has taken various steps to improve English education but the general consensus is, that the standard of English has dropped in spite of all these efforts.

The importance of English education has come to be realized especially in the universities. This has been partly due to the realization that subjects such as medicine, science and technology cannot be profitably taught without resource to English. Though attempts have been made to translate books on these subjects into Sinhala and Tamil, this is a very slow process. Because of the pace at which information is published and because of the cost of translating and publishing books in the national languages, it has become clear in the past decade that especially at the tertiary level it is not possible to do without access to books and journals in English. In medicine, natural sciences and technology, the need to do some teaching and carry out some of the research in English has been realized and steps taken to provide parallel lectures in Sinhala/Tamil and English. The fact that universities in Sri Lanka cannot hope to function as centres of knowledge and research without both staff and students conducting at least some academic activities in English could be regarded as a major issue that has led to the recognition of the importance of English.

The efforts to boost tourism and exports and to encourage foreign investment in the country and the way in which these themes have entered into the national consciousness have also contributed to the reinstatement of English. Either through trade or tourism or through technology, the average Sri Lankan has been drawn closer into contacts with other countries and into sharing international concerns. Sri Lankans are keen in the pursuit of education and on making use of modern technology such as computers and TV and all this has brought about the realization that a world language such as English is a great asset.

2.2.3.5. Features of Declining Proficiency Among English Users:

The unsatisfactory standard of English among ESL users in Sri Lanka is visible in several different ways. There are far more Sinhala and Tamil speakers learning English now, than there ever were during the British occupation. In the English of these new learners, failure of English teaching to achieve a satisfactory standard becomes evident in basically two ways. For example among students from rural areas who come into university after 9–10 years of English at school, and who are admitted to proficiency courses in English during the whole of their undergraduate period (3–4 years), the majority are in possession of no more than an 'interlanguage' at the end of this period. This interlanguage seems to become fossilized in most cases and deteriorate still further in the case of some. This group would belong to the group three bilinguals of Fernando's cline (Fernando 1977:356).

A smaller fraction of the undergraduate population belongs to groups one and two, either by virtue of belonging to the English speaking upper middle class group who live in the towns or because of improvement brought about by English language instruction. The latter category it has to be admitted is negligible and in the case of these learners what seems to bring about improvement is not so much the methods of teaching that are used, but motivation, hard work and perhaps inherent ability to learn languages. As Brodkey points out this group could be said to improve whatever the method that is used (Brodkey 1974:163).

Signs of unsatisfactory standards can be seen even among the students who come from the upper middle class elite, for among these, one comes across students who speak fluently but are not entirely proficient in reading and especially writing. Often their westernized life style and the ease with which they speak the language in interaction with their peers gives an impression of fluency which they do not really possess. On the whole an analogy can be drawn with the famous statement about the rich and the poor in the world: the elite group seem to be becoming less proficient and the less proficient rural group more numerous.

2.2.3.6. The Development of 'Singlish':

The youthful intelligentsia of the present day, have established a different norm in distinguishing themselves from the less educated rural monolinguals. This is the ability to carry on interactions in 'Singlish' (Fernando 1977). Singlish which is a variety of Sinhala generously enriched by English words is spoken by all educated youth. Their peers in the elitist group interact in both English and Singlish, so Singlish forms a link between these two groups. As Fernando points out, Singlish is however a variety of Sinhala and not of English. There is a clear 'cline of bilingualism' (Kachru 1965:363) describable among the English and Sinhala/Tamil bilinguals of Sri Lanka.

2.2.4. The Status of English Today:

2.2.4.1. The Changing Role of English:

When considering the status of English in Sri Lanka today, the question arises as to whether English is to be considered a first language (MT), a foreign language (FL), a second language (SL) or an international auxiliary language (IAL). English in Sri Lanka is described by all these different terms by different writers (Passe 1943, De Souza 1969, Kandiah 1979, 1981, and Walatara 1980). As to which term applies to Sri Lanka, this depends on what is meant by each term, but there is no general agreement about this either. Kandiah (1979:83) agrees with Coates (1961) on the concept of a native speaker of 'Sri Lankan English' and goes on to say that it would be a serious matter to

> 'fail to recognize that Lankan English is an effective first language for a considerable number of its users.'

Even if this were the case the use of the term 'first language' in relation to the use of English in Sri Lanka in general would not be appropriate as it would not apply to the majority of people. There are some who feel that English was not a MT in Sri Lanka at any time, that it did not serve *all purposes* even for the elitist minority (De Souza 1979:48).

In view of the importance of English in the different spheres of commerce, law, medicine, economics and so on, it could be said to have SL rather than FL status. Taking these different facts into account, I feel that English as a SL seem to be the most apt description for English in Sri Lanka at the present

time, though it might be on the way to becoming a FL in the future. Because of recent developments such as English moving towards being given the status of a national language, this possibility may have been averted.

Moag (1982:14) places Sri Lanka in the transitional category from ESL-->EFL. However, at the present time, several things that Moag considers to be features of EFL countries, do not apply to Sri Lanka. According to Moag, in EFL countries, English does not play an important role in the mass media, TV, radio and domains of use. There is also no encouragement and tolerance by the governments concerned for English in education. Though it is necessary to have 'labels' the present writer agrees with Tay (1982:53) that

> 'In the context of education, however, it does not matter much what term we use to describe English. What is important is that there should be a clear understanding of language teaching strategies and a set of clearly defined teaching goals, standards of acceptability and teaching materials based on sound pedagogic principles. If these are absent, the teaching of English will still have its problems no matter how we choose to label English.'

The intranational uses that English seem to have within Sri Lanka and which seems to be becoming increasingly more important support the second language label.

2.2.4.2. The Impact of English on Sinhala:

In present day Sri Lanka there are very few Sinhalese or Tamils who claim English as their MT. Kandiah (1979:83) points out that according to Coates (1961) the estimated sum of English monolinguals in 1961 would be 0.17% of the population. The majority of these would belong to the *Burgher* community (descendants of Dutch and Portuguese settlers who have adopted English as their MT). It would be correct to say that apart from a negligible minority all others acquire Sinhala or Tamil as their first language. At the same time even among the Sinhalese and Tamils living in the most remote areas of the island, and who could not be considered even as receiver bilinguals it would be surprising to find someone who did not know at least a few lexical items in English. This is partly because of the impact that English has had on Sinhala and Tamil (Disanayaka 1976:25-28). There are hundreds of words which have been 'borrowed' and some of these with little or no change. The need for

lexical items for describing various things and processes which have been introduced as part of modern living have not led to the 'coining' of new Sinhala/Tamil words.

It is interesting to note that unlike English borrowings, most of the borrowings from Portuguese and Dutch have been Lankanized to a great extent. This may have been due to the more difficult sound system especially in Dutch, and also perhaps to the unreadiness of the people of these earlier times to introduce into their MT a completely alien set of words. For in these early days of domination, there is no evidence to show that any section of the population had regarded the indigenous language as being inferior in any way, as they did during the British domination. Even in English, difficult sound clusters have been adapted more than the shorter and less difficult sound clusters (Fernando 1977:358). Another reason could be the fact that the Portuguese and the Dutch had control only of the maritime provinces, so the words adapted from their languages would have undergone many transformations by the time they reached areas remote from their control. Since Sinhala monolinguals are quite familiar with these borrowings which have become part of the present day functionally elaborate Sinhala, there is a tendency even among them to prefer borrowed words for certain items even when indigenous Sinhala terms exist. However, monolinguals on the whole tend to use more indigenous words, and this is one way in which they are seen to be different from 'Singlish' speakers.

2.2.4.3. Some Unique Features in the Status of English in Sri Lanka:

The status of English in Sri Lanka differs in some ways from that of other South Asian and African countries. One important difference is that the role of English as a *lingua franca* is less important in Sri Lanka than for instance in India or Malaysia. This is partly due to the fact that until after independence in 1948, English remained very much the language of an elite group and was not accessible to the masses. Though English education was made available to a wider group of people after independence, the restoration of the national languages seems to have effectively done away with the need for an extraneous *lingua franca*. English does tend to function as a *lingua franca* in some situations, e.g. among vendors and buyers in the market places in the towns and in the interaction with tourists who belong to different language backgrounds. Intranationally, Sinhala is the *lingua franca* for the majority of

people belonging to different racial groups within the country. This difference from some other South Asian countries could be attributed to the size of the island and the fact that there are only two major indigenous languages, and also to the decline in English education after the implementation of the national language policy. A neutral medium such as English becoming the *lingua franca*, would be welcomed by minority groups.

The complete reversal that has taken place in the domains of language use among Sinhala/Tamil bilinguals before and after independence gives some indication of the changes that have taken place in the role of English in Sri Lanka (Fernando 1977:345-47). Sinhala is no longer relegated to an inferior position among bilinguals, the way it was before independence. However, this has not diminished the importance of English. English is used:

> 'in several spheres of activity which are essential for the normal conduct of life in the land, for instance in big business, in the import export trade, in shipping and aviation, in the libraries on which the education particularly depends, at the higher levels in various departments and in the spheres of law and medicine and so on at which specialists operate and decisions are taken, and in the ever developing tourist industry' (De Souza 1969 quoted in Kandiah 1969).

To this it is also possible to add mass media and entertainment. English in Sri Lanka in the present day has not changed very much in one very significant aspect, from the pre-independence era.

> 'English in contemporary Sri Lanka would still perform the role of identifying a prestigious group of people in society' (Kandiah 1979:85, De Souza 1979:42).

2.3. Sri Lankan English as a Nativized Variety

2.3.1. Introduction:

Discussing the concept of Sri Lankan English as a distinct variety Kandiah (1981:64) says that,

> 'the English forms and expressions issuing from the mouths and pens of Sri Lankans constitute at all linguistic levels, a highly variegated range of linguistic elements. These extend from some incomprehensible and even, at times apparently unsystematizable

> at one end to items at the other that, except in phonology, appear to conform in most significant respects to the norms of standard English.'

Though it is easy enough to say that there is a distinctive variety of English that could be termed 'Sri Lankan English' and pinpoint certain characteristics of this variety, this does not in fact give a comprehensive picture of the type of English used in the country. Until and unless, an empirical study on a very wide scale is undertaken it would not be possible to point out certain characteristic features and say conclusively that these are indeed what characterize Sri Lankan English.

2.3.2. Characteristics of 'Nativization' Investigated in the Literature:

There is agreement to a great extent among scholars as to the phonological features that characterize Sri Lankan English. Passe (1948), Fernando (1977), and Kandiah (1981) describe the same sort of phonological features as being characteristic.

The same could not be said in relation to syntax, vocabulary and idiom. While a few features are common to all scholarly descriptions, there are many others which are not. The present writer finds that she is not familiar with many of the features that are supposed to characterize Sri Lankan English even though she could definitely call herself a speaker of Sri Lankan English. Not being familiar with these features does not merely indicate that she herself does not use these but that she has not encountered these features in the speech of other 'habitual' users of English of her acquaintance. To consider two examples given in Kandiah (1981:64), the topicalization and deletion of redundancy features in:

1. Kasy, I expect him to make an exciting contribution to Tamil studies.
2. If Rani asks Mahes to help her, sure to oblige.

could not be said to be characteristic of *all* 'habitual' users of Sri Lankan English or even of *most*.

When it comes to vocabulary and idiom, there is even greater disparity between the claims of different scholars. The present writer is familiar with *sil*

(a Buddhist religious observance), *asweddumize* (an agricultural practice) and *junction* (a meeting place of two or more roads where there are usually one or more shops to be found) cited in Kandiah (1981) but not with certain other examples given by him. Similarly while she is familiar with the sort of inversion in *Lucilla auntie* and *Bertie uncle* and has come across the pattern of reduplication in such expressions as *long long chat* and *hot hot hoppers* (a variety of food), she has never come across *jumping jumping* (Fernando 1977:355) or *crying crying* (Passe 1948:384). However in this case the fact that reduplication occurs is borne out in such examples as 'long long chat'.

One reason for this disparity is that no large scale study has ever been undertaken, and each scholar has to depend on his/her own experiences in making these judgements. Another reason is that there is a great deal of difference in the type of English used by different age groups, different racial groups, professional groups etc. Very often what one is familiar with is the language of a particular group, rather than a variety that is common to all groups.

It is also interesting to note that many examples of Sri Lankan English cited by Passe in 1948 seem to be no longer in wide use, among Sri Lankans, e.g. *bellyfull, bull work, from home, blotting, stand out man* (ibid:365–398). There are other expressions quoted as being typical of Sri Lankan and other South Asian varieties which have been found to occur in native speech as well (Vaid 1980:40). Regarding how characteristic a nativized variety should be before it can be termed a nativized variety, Jibril (1982:75) poses some interesting questions in relation to Nigerian English.

> 'Does a linguistic feature have to be common to all Nigerians to qualify for the label 'Nigerian'? Certainly not.'
>
> '...Does a linguistic feature have to belong to Nigeria and nowhere else to qualify as Nigerian?'

Though shared features are common among different varieties and no feature can be said to be used by every speaker of a community, still, to cite a feature used by a small fraction of a particular population, and to call this a feature of the use of English on a national scale is grossly misleading. The question then arises, as to how far the features that have been cited by various scholars as

being characteristic of Sri Lankan English, could really be regarded as being so.

To get back to the point on which there is a good deal of agreement, namely pronunciation, it becomes apparent that the pronunciation that is described as being characteristic, is the pronunciation of a group who belong to the upper end of Kachru's 'cline of bilingualism' and the group that is described by Fernando as being group one bilinguals. However the group described by this writer as using a fossilized interlanguage in 2.2.3.5 speak with the sort of pronunciation that Fernando describes as being that of group two bilinguals (Fernando 1977:351-352) and also perhaps with phonological features ascribed to group three bilinguals. Group three bilinguals are characterized by the way they introduce vowels into their consonant clusters beginning with /s/: *iste:sen*, *iskru* and *isku:l* etc. While the phonological features of these two groups of bilinguals are not regarded as being characteristic of Sri Lankan English, some of the syntactic, lexical and idiomatic features of their speech seem to be incorporated in the descriptions of Sri Lankan English.

2.3.3. Slang and Diglossia in Sri Lankan English:

Another weakness of these descriptions is the failure to take into account the existence of sub-varieties such as slang and language that is used only by certain age groups, and the failure to take into account the diglossic situation that exists in the use of the spoken as opposed to the written language as well as the colloquial as opposed to the formal language.

2.3.3.1. Slang:

To take slang first, it is possible to see that quite a few of the characteristics of Sri Lankan English that have been described are slang expressions that occur in the speech of teenagers and young men interacting within their peer groups. The use of *men* cited by Passe (365) and Kandiah (1979:94) is a case in point. It is mostly used by men and boys as an expression of solidarity and intimacy and is used interchangeably with *machan* a local expression (meaning brother-in-law). It is less in evidence among women and older people in general. The slang quality of this expression comes out especially in that it is never used in speech with parents teachers and elders. The question then arises whether features such as these should be regarded as being characteristic of Sri Lankan English.

2.3.3.2. Literary Colloquial Diglossia:

The second point regarding diglossia is even more important, especially because of the diglossic situation that exists in the indigenous languages: Sinhala and Tamil. Both Passe (1948:32) and Kandiah (1979:135) discuss the difference that exist between the spoken and the written English used by Sri Lankans. Kandiah attributes the choice of standard British English in the written form to the kind of

> 'psychology that the experience of the colonial interlude helped to develop.'

This may well be so, but on the other hand, it is also perhaps because both Sinhala and Tamil speakers are so used to the idea of a literary language different from the colloquial variety. Literary Sinhala for instance, is not used in speech under any circumstances and would not in fact be capable of achieving such goals as expressing intimacy, building rapport and so on that are primary concerns in speech. It is the need to express intimacy and build rapport and the need to express culture specific things that have led to the development of 'Lankanisms'. Since the need to do this does not often arise in writing generally (expect in creative writing and in personal correspondence) the standard is found adequate for writing of other types.

2.3.3.3. Formal Informal Diglossia:

Kandiah stresses only the existence of the literary colloquial/diglossia, but the formal informal diglossia is equally important. In his 1981 paper entitled 'Lankan English Schizoglossia' he goes on to say that the efforts on the part of Sri Lankan users of English to move away from the characteristic Sri Lankan speech in the direction of standard speech causes what he terms linguistic schizoglossia:

> '....the Lankan users efforts to turn away from the forms and rules of his own distinctive usage to the more distant alien forms and rules of StE represents in effect an attempt to transform his linguistic personality, to change from what he essentially and truly is into something that he can never really be.... predictably this change has adverse consequences from the point of view of his linguistic performance' (p70).

He gives four examples in support of his statements which are instances of

hypercorrection, arising according to the said schizoglossia. This type of hypercorrection is more characteristic of the speech of speakers of a fossilized interlanguage than that of the average educated speaker of Sri Lankan English.

In fact one important characteristic of an educated speaker of Sri Lankan English is his/her ability to move with ease from the code s/he uses in informal situations into the more formal code used in formal situations, where special linguistic features for rapport building etc. are not called for. This becomes apparent when observing the speech of the same individual in official vs. family speech situations. Therefore, if the speech of educated Sri Lankans is to be taken as the norm for a definition of Sri Lankan English, the diglossia that exists in formal and informal speech as well as the written and the spoken has to be taken into account. I am inclined to agree with Labov that:

> 'this is the normal situation.. heterogeneity is not only common it is the natural result of linguistic factors. We agree that it is the absence of style shifting and multi-layered communication that would be disfunctional' (Labov 1970 quoted in Kandiah 1981).

The diglossia in Sri Lankan English would be considered in greater detail at a later point in this chapter.

2.3.4. Person Specific and Situation Specific Nativization:

One of the problems about generalizing from specific examples of Sri Lankanisms of one person, or even a number of people, is that these examples are often not only person specific but also situation specific. For instance reduplication in a phrase such as *hot hot hoppers* is bound to be recognized as a frequently occurring phrase, and as such, as an acceptable Sri Lankanism by most educated Sri Lankan speakers of English, but the same could not be said of other expressions based on *hot hot*. The present writer herself finds expressions such as *he went jumping jumping* and *she went crying crying* totally unacceptable. These expressions may be acceptable to some, but certainly not to all. Thus if reduplication is considered a characteristic of Sri Lankan English it is only in relation to certain speech situations.

2.3.4.1. Nativization Resulting from Culture Transfer:

Though the present writer agrees that it is a futile exercise to try to explain all nativized features of Sri Lankan English as being due to translation or language transfer, language transfer often takes place in giving voice to culture conditioned thought, especially in the linguistic performance of learners, as she has illustrated elsewhere (Fernando 1982).

The culture conditioned conception of certain things goes some way in explaining why an expression such as *hot hot hoppers* is more acceptable than *she went jumping jumping*. *Jumping jumping* is merely a translation from the Sinhala *pane pane giya:* used to describe the movement of skipping along. Though this is an apt description of the movement it is not culture specific in that this movement is the same whoever does it and under whatever circumstances it is done. *Hot hot hoppers* on the other hand is the expression of something that is typically culture conditioned. While *pane pane giya:* and *skipped along* conjures the same mental image *hot hoppers* and *unu unu a:ppe* conjure two different images. Sri Lankanisms then are not the result of translating from one language to another but from one culture to another: it is the result not of language transfer as such but of culture transfer.

There are many lexical items for food, clothes, customs and so on which are specifically Sri Lankan, and it would be impossible to speak about these things without using these specific terms -e.g. *sil, shrameda:ne, bane, ambul thie:l,* and *chena* which are formed by rendering the Sinhala word into English. Words such as *string hoppers, Sinhala New Year,* and *auspicious time* are direct translations from the Sinhala. There are also English words which have acquired other meanings in addition to the standard meaning such as *junction, station,* and *machine*.

2.3.4.2. The Irregularity in the Occurrence of Nativized Features:

As Fernando (1977:349) points out, grammatical features which distinguish Sri Lankan English do not occur with any predictable regularity and similarity. Lexical features such as greetings and farewells, such as *so how?* (Sinhala: itin kohomede?) *I'll go and come,* (Sinhala: (man) gihilla: ennan) form part of the repertoire of some Sri Lankan speakers of English and exist side by side with standard forms. There is so much diversity in the use of these forms depending on the social background, education, speech situation and so on that

these could not be regarded as indicating that:

> 'Lankan English operates on the basis of a distinctive, but well defined system of rules that embody generalizations that account for its forms' (Kandiah 1981:101).

On the contrary phonological features seem to be the one characteristic which sets Sri Lankan English apart as a clearly distinctive variety. These features are discussed in detail in Passe (1948). It is interesting to note that in most of the scholarly writing examples of 'Lankanisms' are not from the writers own speech and that scholars who advocate the teaching of the 'nativized variety' and the use of the nativized variety in writing, themselves tend to write in impeccable standard English.

2.3.5. Creative Writing in Sri Lankan English:

Most scholars dealing with Sri Lankan English do not fail to point out the unhealthy state of creative writing in English, in Sri Lanka. The use of a literary idiom -standard English- is often seen as the reason for this.

> 'I have yet to read a piece of creative writing by a Ceylonese which gathers our landscape, our vegetation, our domestic surroundings, intonation of our speech unobstrusively into an effective idiom, giving me the sense of here and now, the immediacy which is the moving spirit of art' (Gunatilleke 1952 quoted in Kandiah 1981).

Kandiah (p75) feels that this is largely due to creative writers cutting themselves off from the idiom that is their very own.

> 'The system that these writers turn so carelessly away from is that which is interwoven with the very pith and marrow of their unique symbiotic lives. For them to shake off the distinctive forms and rhythms of the everyday speech which express the system is thus to debilitate themselves, to cut their writing off disastrously from the very source of its life and vitality, impoverishing it and rendering it artificial, sterile and anaemic' (p76).

2.3.5.1. The Role of 'Native Idiom' in Creative Writing:

At this stage it is necessary to point out that creative writers hardly ever use language the way it is spelt out by a standard or a dialect. A creative writer is capable of using one or both or neither for his/her particular purpose- that of rendering an experience his/her very own. The fact that the impact of a particular situation or event has had on a writer can be conveyed even when s/he is an 'alien' to that situation comes out in a work such as Leonard Woolf's *Village in the Jungle*.

The experience of having witnessed the lives of a small backward community in Beddegama, a remote village in the middle of a dense jungle in Sri Lanka, plagued by poverty, disease and evil, is rendered in this book in a way that makes it difficult to believe that these lines came from the pen of an European (Elkin 1979:68-73). Leonard Woolf needless to say was a speaker of standard British English. If a creative writer who was an 'outsider' when it came to the type of experience described was able to render such a powerful picture of a situation that is essentially Sri Lankan, there is no reason why it is not possible for Sri Lankan creative writers to do the same. The language is there to be used as the writer thinks fit, and it is not so much his/her use of the standard language which makes a creative writer's work superficial but his/her lack of creative ability.

The type of idiom used in the work of Indian writers such as Raja Rao and S.K. Narayan is by no means *the spoken English idiom* of the Indian people. It would be uncommon to find Indians who go about saying in English:

> '(you have) blessed my hovel with the good dust of your feet'

or

> 'Oh Maharaj, we are all lickers of your feet'
> (Kachru 1965:400).

This point is supported by Verma (1982:177), when he says in relation to 'coinages' such as *flower-bed*, *rape-sister*, and *sister-sleeper*,

> 'they are register-bound -restricted to the register of short

> stories and novels.... they are highly idiosyncratic and arbitrary. One might go to the extent of saying that in some cases they are bad translations. One of the most significant facts about these flower-bed types of creations is that they are not used even by their authors in their ordinary everyday language. They are not deviations but arbitrary creations.'

Still, these expressions are authentic because what is expressed is not the authentic *English speech* of Indians, but a translation of an essentially Indian experience, as uttered in one of the Indian languages.

The inability of Sri Lankan creative writers to render typically Sri Lankan experiences is to a great extent due to their lack of first hand knowledge of the experiences they try to describe and even in instances when there is first hand knowledge it is often as an observer who operates on a different plane from that of the participants. The writer's participation in the event or situation in such cases is somewhat similar to that of a tourist. It is the outcome of the habit of the more westernized educated groups to create invisible barriers that keep events and situations in the 'lesser world' around them from intruding into their lives.

The English language and the westernized way of life may be indirectly responsible for this state of affairs by turning English educated intellectuals into 'marginal men', but it cannot be attributed to the use of the standard language as opposed to the nativized variety. In fact rural life especially would be difficult to describe using 'Lankanisms', as most of these 'isms' are restricted to the speech of a small minority of urban dwellers.

Most Sri Lankan creative writers writing in English opt to write about the wider society of slums, villages, factories and workshops. If they turned more towards their own society which is typically educated, upper middle class and city-bred perhaps the results would be more successful.

2.3.6. Formal Writing in English in Sri Lanka:

When it comes to academic and other forms of prose, Sri Lankan speakers do not differ from the standard model, the only deviations being lexical items denoting exclusively Sri Lankan institutions, customs, food, clothes, kinship terms and so on. Newspapers and journals published in English use standard English in all serious prose. The format of the advertisements and notices etc.

also tend to follow a standard model. This is of interest in comparison with journalistic practices in India, Ghana and the Philippines where advertisements and notices etc. have evolved a typically nativized format (Kachru 1982 and elsewhere, Gonsalez 1982:213-215, Tingley 1981:39-62). Empirical evidence has shown that educated Sri Lankan speech is intelligible to speakers of different languages and different varieties of English (Smith and Rifiqzad 1979:371-382).

2.3.7. Sri Lankan English Stereotypes:

Sri Lankan English has been the butt end for jokes, and has provided material for stereotypes like all other varieties of nativized Englishes. There are many dramas etc. that make use of the more hilarious aspects of Sri Lankan English for effects of irony and humour; e.g. dramas such as *Well Mudaliyar, He Comes From Jaffna*, the plays of H. C. N. De Lanerolle and the writings of T. Vittachi. However, the Sri Lankanisms that are made fun of in these plays and writings are mostly outdated expressions that are no longer widely used today.

2.4. Research and Ideas Regarding the Role of Nativized English in TESL

2.4.1. Introduction:

When it comes to teaching, it has been suggested that a Sri Lankan English model would be more suitable for teaching English at the school level rather than a standard model (De Souza 1969). Kandiah feels that:

> 'Lankan English could conceivably play a role in the writing of course material for rural students, if not others, particularly in the lower classes where considerable emphasis would fall on everyday rather than formal situations' (1981:72).

The reasons for not discarding standard English (in the sense of a standard grammar such as the standard found in the Quirk grammar and *not* standard RP pronunciation) in favour of Sri Lankan usage in teaching are discussed in this section together with suggestions for the role Sri Lankan English should play in teaching programmes.

2.4.2. Arguments for and Against the Use of Nativized English in TESL:

2.4.2.1. Arguments for Teaching Nativized English:

Those who advocate the use of Sri Lankan English idiom in ESL materials are guided by the belief that because this idiom would be less 'alien' and the subject matter that could be discussed in this idiom familiar to the learners it would motivate learning. Kandiah (1981:74)[2] presents strong arguments in support of this view by citing materials which fail to do this because of the artificiality created by trying to fit in everyday experience familiar to the learner within the framework of a limited set of grammatical structures. In contrast he cites a passage from Penguin's *Success with English* which

> 'uses the language in a conversational setting of a kind where it truly comes into its own, evoking an immediate sense of a living situation and a real experience rooted in a particular outlook and culture' (p74).

Kandiah implies that Sri Lankan experiences using Sri Lankan idiom presented in this way would have a similar effect. The passage is certainly more interest provoking than the passages cited from the Sri Lankan text books. However, because of the particular outlook and the culture that the passage embodies Kandiah feels that,

> 'no doubt this very fact would tend to put the passage beyond the reach of the average rural learner of English in Sri Lanka.'

On the contrary, I feel that this would evoke interest because it is different. If the passage is introduced without any explanation and used merely to teach the 'language' meaning grammar, then it would not be a success at all. But if compared with local situations and the differences brought to the notice of the learners, it would stimulate interest and lead to learning.

2.4.2.2. Reasons for Continuing to Teach Standard English:

Just as much as monotonously familiar events and situations have no motivative power when churned out as teaching materials, there is also danger in turning away from the standard language to a more colloquial Sri Lankan idiom. If any experience embodying an alien cultural outlook is unfamiliar to

the average rural Sri Lankan learner, the same could be said about the sub-culture in Sri Lankan society that is embodied in the Sri Lankan colloquial idiom. The users of this idiom are typically city-bred upper middle class and have no link with the masses of the rural Sri Lankan society. In this sense this idiom too is alien.

At some stage (preferably at the tertiary level, and perhaps at the higher classes at school) learners should be made aware of the differences between the colloquial idiom and the standard language, but it would not be advisable to use it as a substitute, for several reasons:

- This idiom is very much a colloquial idiom, and as such restricted to the domains of family and friendship. It is not considered appropriate for other domains by most Sri Lankans who use the standard language for domains such as employment, business and public life. One could easily get by using the standard language and not using the nativized colloquial idiom, but the reverse is not true.

- As discussed earlier, there is very little agreement as to what could be considered the typical nativized usage. In such a situation, there would be great difficulty trying to decide what to teach. There has to be some sort of precise specification as to what nativized Sri Lankan English is before any means for teaching it systematically at any level could be considered.

- A learner who has command of the standard language -both its grammar and the rules of use- could easily acquire the colloquial idiom by actually using the language; if s/he wishes to do so. The same is not true of those at the bottom of Kachru's 'cline of bilingualism'. Those speakers whose interlanguage becomes fossilized, do not seem to be able to learn the standard idiom.

- The argument that nativized usage would lead to better creative output does not seem to be justified either, for a writer such as Amos Tutuola is not considered a great writer the way Raja Rao, Narayan or Chinua Achebe are. The difference is, the latter are able to use the standard language and also create a special nativized idiom in their writing, whereas, in the case of the former the type of idiom used is not a matter of choice. The basic tool -in this case the standard usage- seems to be a necessary requisite before there is any hope of creating a great artifact that embodies a particular native experience.

- The nativized colloquial idiom is limited to intranational use. At the present time, when the world seems to be shrinking fast in that there is much international communication, it is

essential to prepare learners to cope with such a situation.

A question that is often asked is after all how many of these learners get an opportunity of actually speaking with a native speaker of English? The present writer would say, many more than once thought possible. With the expansion of tourism, the development of the free trade zone and the opening up of job opportunities in Middle Eastern and African countries, more and more people from a rural background are coming into contact with people of other nationalities. Though not many of these perhaps, may be Britons and Americans, in all such international encounters English is used as the *lingua franca*. Therefore, it is essential to teach these learners an idiom that would be understood across national barriers.

Since intelligibility studies have shown that the Sri Lankan's pronunciation does not cause undue problems as long as s/he is capable of using a standard grammar and vocabulary and standard sociolinguistic conventions, the learners will be able to communicate with both native speakers of English and also with speakers of other varieties of English such as Indian, African or Filipino if their language is not restricted to a nativized variety.

2.5. TESL in Sri Lanka

2.5.1. The General Situation of ESL:

In present day Sri Lanka, in theory every child who goes to school is entitled to learn English. English is taught from grade three onwards in all government schools and is taught from earlier on in private schools and in ex-private city schools. In theory, students who leave school after sitting the G.C.E (O.L) examination receive seven years of English teaching, while students who drop out after grade eight receive five years of English teaching under this system.

There are 6 teacher training colleges for teachers of English, but on the whole many English teachers especially in remote areas of the island have not received specific training. Very often the only qualification of these teachers to teach English is a pass in English at the G.C.E (O.L) examination. They are generally graduates, with B.A. or B.Ed. degrees. The school curriculum usually

allows one English period (35 or 40 minutes) a day for children in grades 3-10. English instruction in grades 11 and 12 tend to vary from school to school. The emphasis is largely on grammar and reading. The text books are uniform in that they are published and distributed by the Ministry of Education. The teaching methods generally used are reading aloud, pattern drills, vocabulary and cloze exercises and multiple choice items to test reading comprehension.

2.5.2. ESL in City and Village Schools:

There is a big difference in learning English in a city school and learning English in a village school. Children in city schools are exposed to English outside the classroom and have the opportunities to use the language if they are inclined to do so. A smaller proportion of children in city schools also come into contact with TV and radio, especially TV. In the case of children in rural areas, English tends to be a foreign language rather than a second language as it is limited to the English period in the classroom. They do not tend to use English at all in their daily lives, and have very little exposure to it outside the classroom. In fact there is little real exposure to English even within the classroom.

There is great disparity between the amount of English taught and learnt even though theoretically there is uniformity, as all have the same allocation in the time table and an uniform set of text books. The amount of English that a child in a rural school learns will depend on such factors as whether the teacher/s are trained or not, the number of class hours actually spent on English teaching, the enthusiasm and the attitude of the teacher, the motivation of the child, the attitude of the parents and so on. It is essential to note at this point that even though rural children come from a non-English speaking background, it would be almost impossible to find parents from rural areas who are against their children learning English.

2.5.2.1. The Attitude of the State Towards ELT:

At present, the policy of the Sri Lankan government seems to be to encourage English teaching at every level. This is often revealed in such policy statements as those given below:

> 'The government places high priority on the need to improve the standard of English in the country. This it seeks to

> do by giving every child an opportunity to learn this valuable world language' (R. Wickramasinghe Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Employment 1981).
>
> 'The Ministry of Higher Education would like every student in our universities and technical colleges to make the most of the opportunities available for study and training and for employment on the completion of studies. In higher education there is a wealth of material available only in the English language, and there are many opportunities for further study and for training and for employment for which a working knowledge of an international language like English is essential. It is therefore very much our concern that the standard of English should improve to enable every student to make use of these opportunities' (Dr F.C.S.P. Kalpage, Secretary to the Ministry of Education 1981).

In present day Sri Lanka, English teaching is an important concern of the Ministry of Education and all institutions and authorities concerned with education at different levels. A great deal of emphasis is placed on training teachers both at home and abroad. In the past two decades commissions have been set up to inquire into English teaching in the island and aid has been sought from various overseas agencies such as the British Council, UNESCO, USIS and NORAD.

2.5.2.2. Growing Interest in Methodology:

There is also growing interest in the latest methodology. This has been the case especially at universities, where necessity has driven course planners to try out different methods. Different methods have been tried and discarded in the past, and one of the modern methods that have been tried in recent times is ESP (Smith 1981). Because of the limited time and the pressing need for learners to be able to read and do research in their academic fields, ESP is regarded as an answer to the problem by some. Communicative language teaching has been introduced into the English teaching programme in schools (Mosback 1984:178–186) but it is too early yet to judge whether this method has had any impact on ESL teaching in Sri Lanka.

2.5.2.3. Help Given by International Organizations:

Apart from the government of Sri Lanka, international organizations take a keen interest in ELT in Sri Lanka. A selection of the latest journals and books and other reference materials dealing with ELT are made available to teachers

at the British Council Centre for Information on ELT in Colombo. This centre also conducts seminars and workshops on ELT. The British Council is also instrumental in providing advisers on ELT to launch new ELT programs or to evaluate or assist existing programs. British Council advisers work closely with Ministry of Education staff and university English departments. ESL teachers are also sent for training abroad through the British Council, USIS, Asia Foundation and other agencies (Hilton 1983:10-12). Voluntary organizations such as the SLFUW in association with the World Federation of University Women, have also shown a great deal of interest and done much to improve ELT.

However, problems such as the lack of resources and the scarcity of trained teachers is such, that even with such aid, it is not possible to see much progress taking place in the sphere of ESL in Sri Lanka.

2.5.3. ESL at the Tertiary Level:

2.5.3.1. Introduction:

There are 6 universities and 3 university colleges in Sri Lanka. The ESL programmes at these universities vary from one university to another. There is no uniformity in methodology, selection of teaching materials, testing and in the recruitment of teachers.

The English departments of some universities offer ESL proficiency courses during all 3-4 years of a student's university career. Others offer ESL instruction for only part of the university career. Similarly there are variations in the selection of teaching material. Some English departments design their own ESL courses, while others use ELT material produced in Britain and/or the United States. The university colleges generally make use of materials designed by another Sri Lankan university.

The English departments of all universities follow a general pattern of placement at the beginning of an academic year. Up until 1981, students were placed in proficiency groups on the results of the placement test taken at the beginning of the university year. A new system came into operation in 1981.

According to the new system, students entering university each year sit for an entrance test. On the results of this test they are divided into groups.

These groups follow an intensive course in English for 5 hours each day for 8-10 weeks. At the end of this period, they sit the placement test. They are re-grouped on the results of this test. Since a large proportion of students who enter university come from the rural areas in Sri Lanka, on average the English proficiency of present day undergraduates is very low. As the placement tests held each year amply demonstrate, undergraduate proficiency in English ranges from zero proficiency to a very high degree of fluency in the language. The placement test results of students entering the University of Colombo, for the academic year 1981-1982 given below (Table 2.1) reveal the general pattern. Even the students with zero proficiency are generally acquainted with the English alphabet and a few lexical items in English.

Table 2.1 Performance Profile for the Placement Test for New Admissions in the Different Faculties at the University of Colombo 1981

Faculty Nos.	Mean Score	% Scoring >40%	% Scoring 40-54%	% Scoring 55-74%	% Scoring <75%
M 183	72.3	07.7	10.4	23.5	58.5
NS 148	62.6	20.9	15.2	24.7	39.2
L 75	42.4	48.0	12.0	24.0	16.0
A 402	26.3	73.9	09.9	10.5	05.8

The level of English of undergraduates entering university also differs according to the different faculties. The level of English proficiency among students in the faculties of law, natural sciences and medicine is generally higher than that of the students in arts and commerce. This is largely due to more students from city schools with better laboratory and library facilities entering the science, law and medical faculties. Most of these students tend to be fluent in English. This trend has been changing since the selection to universities is now made on a district basis, which ensures that students from less developed areas get the opportunity to enter these faculties. This new trend becomes apparent when two sets of placement test results from the University of Colombo; one set from the latter part of the 70's (Table 2.2) is compared with a more recent set (Table 2.1).

Table 2.2 Performance Profile for the Placement Test for New Admissions in the Different Faculties at the University of Colombo 1979

Faculty Nos.	Mean Score	% Scoring >40%	% Scoring 40-54%	% Scoring 55-74%	% Scoring <75%
M 164	72.0	04.3	09.1	34.8	51.8
NS 151	63.5	23.2	12.6	25.8	38.9
L 44	54.6	36.4	13.6	27.3	22.7
A 357	31.3	78.7	07.9	10.4	03.1

While the lack of English proficiency at the school level is regretted, it does not become a matter for great concern until these students get to university. Though English is a compulsory subject for the 'O' levels, a pass in English at the 'O' levels is *not* compulsory. What is perhaps only a matter of regret for the class teacher becomes a matter of grave concern for the university teachers, because of the way it affects the students' academic work at the university. Time and again there have been complaints, about the way undergraduates seem to limit themselves very narrowly to lecture notes and to a few books available in Sinhala/Tamil translation, because of their inability to make use of reference material available only in English. There is tremendous pressure on the English departments of the universities to organize their English teaching programmes to meet this need.

2.5.3.2. The ESL Programme at the University of Colombo:

The ESL proficiency course at the University of Colombo, consists of three basic levels plus a fourth level which is optional. The three basic levels illustrate a basic, medium and fairly advanced level of reading comprehension. The optional fourth level consists of a 2 year course which is more advanced and includes additional skills in writing, speaking and listening. Level 4 is geared towards preparing learners for using English in places of employment and in other such situations by teaching a variety of skills such as taking part in interviews, discussions, debates, writing minutes, reports, business letters, listening to commentaries and so on. This course trains learners to understand

and appreciate different registers and styles of writing.

Table 2.3 The ELT Programme at the University of Colombo - Undergraduate Courses in ESL

Year	Fac.	Course	Content	Compul-sory Optional Courses	Compul-sory Optional Pass
1 2 3 4	A L	L1	Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Some Writing & Speech	Comp.	Comp.
1 2 3	NS	"	"	N Comp.	N Comp
1 2 3 4	A L	L2	"	Comp.	Comp.
1 2 3	NS	"	"	N Comp.	N Comp.
1 2 3 4	A L	L3	"	N Comp.	N Comp.
1 2 3	NS	"	"	Comp.	Comp.
1	M	L1	"	N Comp.	N Comp.
1	M	L2 L3	"	N Comp.	N Comp.
1 2 3	A	CC1 L4	Reading, Writing, Speech, Listening, Some Literature and Style	Optional	N Comp.
2 3 4	A	CC2 L4	"	"	"

A = Arts NS = Natural Sciences L = Law
L1 = Level 1 L2 = Level 2 L3 = Level 3
CC1 = Certificate Course Year 1 (Level 4)
CC2 = Certificate Course Year 2 (Level 4)

Table 2.4 The ELT Programme at the University of Colombo
- Undergraduate Courses in English Language and Literature

Year	Fac.	Course	Content	Comp. Optional Course
1 2 3	A	B.A (Gen.)	English Lang. and Literature	Optional
1 2 3 4	A	B.A (Sp.)	"	"

A = Arts B.A. (Gen.) = B.A. General
B.A. (Sp.) = B.A. Special

Table 2.5 The ELT Programme at the University of Colombo
- Postgraduate Courses in English Language and Literature

Year	Faculty	Course	Content	Compulsory Optional Course
Post Grad	A	M.A in EL ELT	English Lang. and Literature	Optional
Post Grad	A	Diploma in EL & ELT	" Methods	"
Post Grad	ED	Diploma in TESL	English Lang. Literature & Methodology	"

The three basic levels of proficiency concentrate on grammar and comprehension and also include some speech and listening. The learners proceed through a set of graded materials, graded according to the complexity of grammatical structures and vocabulary. The faculties of arts and commerce follow a common teaching and testing programme, while separate courses and tests have been developed for the faculties of law, natural sciences and medicine. At present a pass at levels 1 and 2 is compulsory for arts and commerce students. Medical students follow the Intensive Course, but do not attend classes during term time, as there is no provision made for English classes in their time table. Similarly, students in the natural sciences faculty

also tend to follow only the Intensive Course, even though in their case, provision is made for English classes in their time table.

2.5.3.2.1. Placement in the Four Level Structure:

According to the present system, all new entrants to the University of Colombo are compulsorily required to take the test for new entrants. On the results of this test, students who score >75% are assigned into groups for the Intensive Course held before the academic year proper begins. Those who score <75% are exempted from following proficiency classes. At the end of the course, the students who follow the Intensive Course take the placement test and on the results of this test, they are assigned to different levels. See Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 The Placement Test Results in Relation to the Proficiency Level Structure

Score	Level
75%>	Exempted from level 3
55-74%	Level 3
45-54%	Level 2
45%<	Level 1

At the end of the academic year, students take the proficiency test for his/her assigned level, and if s/he passes, move on to the next level. Therefore, at each level classes contain 2, 3 and 4 year students who have moved upwards through the system as well as 1 year students who have joined in on the results of the placement test.

2.5.3.2.2. Course Materials:

Course materials used at the University of Colombo are designed by the academic staff of the Department of English. In designing materials for the students in the faculties of law and natural sciences some guidance is sought from the staff of those faculties. Teaching materials are revised and updated from time to time. Weekly and fortnightly meetings are held to discuss

materials, and teaching problems connected with them. ELT publications from Britain and the USA are used as supplementary reading.

2.5.3.2.3. Achievement Tests:

The achievement tests at the end of the year consist of one paper each for levels 1, 2 and 3, designed to test grammar, reading comprehension and vocabulary. As students in the faculty of natural sciences are required to write in English, the proficiency tests for these students also include a writing component. The fourth level (the certificate course) examination consists of two papers; a reading comprehension paper and a grammar and composition paper. The reading comprehension paper tests the ability to comprehend both factual and literary prose and also different styles of writing, while the grammar and composition paper sets out to test grammatical knowledge and the ability to write letters and essays etc. At all levels, the answers to comprehension questions may be given either in English or in the learners' MT.

2.5.3.2.4. Other Courses in English at the University of Colombo:

Apart from the vast proficiency programme, some of the universities (including the University of Colombo) also offer courses for students who wish to read English as a subject at the undergraduate level. The students who opt for these courses are drawn from city schools, from among the small number of students who take English as a subject for the 'A' Levels. The lecturing staff in the English departments of the universities and some of the English language instructors at universities and technical colleges are recruited from among this group. In 1983, an M.A. in English Language and ELT was instituted at the University of Colombo, followed in 1984 by a Diploma in EL and ELT. A Diploma in TESL is also offered by the Faculty of Education of the University of Colombo.

Other ESL classes include proficiency courses for

- non-academic staff of the university
- academic staff of the university
- English for careers (an extension course)
- extension courses for institutions such as banks in Colombo.

2.5.4. Why CC Oriented Teaching is Needed: A Critique of English Teaching at the Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka:

The important role played by the English language in such areas as business, administration, law and education and the rising importance of English as a national language makes it necessary to view English teaching at the tertiary level in a wider perspective than merely as being academic reading oriented. Academic reading is certainly a very important consideration, but it is by no means the only one. The English courses at the tertiary level are called upon to make up for the deficiencies of the English teaching that has gone before to some extent. While trying to help the undergraduates to cope with the immediate problems of academic reading, the English courses are also called upon to cope with the problem of preparing learners for the wider responsibilities that await them in jobs and professions. The need for a more interactive CC oriented approach to English teaching at the tertiary level should be considered in relation to the various issues arising from the present academic reading oriented approach.

2.5.4.1. The Failure of the Academic Reading Approach to Bring About the Desired Results:

The English courses at the tertiary level have so far been geared to teach academic reading. The grammar/reading comprehension approach which was expected to bring this about has shown no signs of success. After 2 - 3 years of English instruction where the teaching of referential meaning is the sole concern, students are still unable to read reference material. Furthermore, the students themselves are dissatisfied with the present grammar/vocabulary comprehension based English courses. Though the teaching of academic reading is the primary aim of the university authorities, students do not seem to attach the same level of importance to this aspect. The students' main complaint against existing English courses is their lack of interest in attending English classes which are a waste of time since these courses do not teach how to *use* the language in speech, listening reading and writing. The lack of motivation and falling attendance levels can be directly attributed to this attitude of the students. Though the university departments may regard academic reading and therefore referential English as being the sole concern of teaching English, students do not regard this as being a worthwhile enough reason for learning English.

The question also arises whether a grammar vocabulary based referential approach itself is sufficient even to enable students to do academic reading. The results obtained so far seem to indicate clearly, that it is not sufficient. In order to understand the logical reasoning in a given text, something of the discourse patterns of logical reasoning discussed by Kaplan (1966:1-20) and Clyne (1981:61-66) need to be mastered. In order to write an acceptable text, once again it is these discourse patterns and the patterns of logical reasoning required in the language that are necessary. Since both these are to a certain extent culture-conditioned, to be able to do this, their control requires the student to be in possession of some degree of sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic aspects of when, where, how, whom and in what manner comes into reading and writing as well as speech. The referential meaning -the message- cannot be got across or understood, unless the way in which the message is conveyed is understood. Thus, it is essential to think in terms of CC even in relation to referential concerns such as academic reading.

2.5.4.2. The Importance of CC in Relation to Academic Reading:

It is essential to remember that CC involves more than face to face interaction; that it is not restricted to speech. CC involves speaking and listening, reading and writing. Both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence are required whichever of these is being performed and therefore CC comes into all these functions. Interaction takes place on different planes between listener and speaker and between writer and reader. Therefore, even in the case of academic reading and writing there is interaction, and therefore CC is involved.

2.5.4.3. The Wider Concerns of a University Education:

It will not be disputed that the purpose of a University education should not be restricted to the narrow concerns of passing examinations. It is expected to lead to further development and the future good of the students. Failure to take this aspect into consideration in relation to English teaching at the tertiary level is largely responsible for the failure of English courses at this level in Sri Lanka. This is also the reason why students who neglect the English classes offered free by the university pay for English tuition outside the university. Most tutories claim to teach how to speak, listen, read and write -in short how to use the language for interaction and communication at different levels.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the learners should prefer these private lessons to courses which do no more than offer to teach them how to read academic texts and do not even do this satisfactorily.

2.5.4.3.1. Instrumental Motivation in Relation to CC as Opposed to Referential Meaning:

The term 'instrumental' which is often used in relation to student motivation in language teaching situations such as in Sri Lanka is by no means a definitive term. In so far as it means that it leads to tangible material benefits, English can be regarded in this light in relation to the motivation of university students in Sri Lanka. However, it must be stressed that *instrumental* does not necessarily equal *referential*. The majority of undergraduates regard learning English as instrumental in relation to future job opportunities rather than to present reference reading. Getting employment in the first place, career advancement and being eligible for high ranking jobs are dependent to a considerable extent on English proficiency as mentioned earlier in section 2.2.3.4. At the very basic level the instrumental nature of English proficiency is demonstrated by the requirement that, at the University of Colombo, a student must pass the proficiency levels 1 & 2 in English in order to obtain his/her degree. Thus it could be argued that it is indeed instrumental motivation that makes attendance rates at levels one and two especially in the third and fourth years higher than at the other levels and also higher than the attendance at these levels in the first and second years. At the employment seeking stage too the instrumental motivation comes into play as students with high academic ability are often disadvantaged because of the lack of interactive English and therefore interactive English is regarded by most learners as a passport to career success. In all this the instrumental motive is clearly evident. What is equally evident is the fact that this does not necessarily limit the type of English required to referential English.

In seeking employment in banks, in the mercantile sector and in many government boards and corporations, interviews are held in English. Interactive English needless to say is essential in such situations. For career advancement, ability to take part in international conferences, which are invariably held in English, undertake professional reading most of which is in English, seek higher training usually also available only in English and write reports, articles etc. English becomes indispensable.

Especially at the present time with English taking on the importance of a national language in Sri Lanka, more and more English is being used in the activities of the academic, business and professional life of the country. More correspondence seems to be conducted in English, more meetings, conferences etc. are being held in English and the resulting documentation is also done in English. For example, letters sent out to university staff by the university administration regarding leave, salaries, terms of employment and pension/provident fund etc. are in English and board meetings etc. at the university are also held in English. In order to equip learners to contribute to the development of the country, it is essential to teach them the English that can be used for such situations of interaction and communication. This process should most certainly begin at the school level, but since the students who come into university at present have not had this kind of training in schools, the situation has to be remedied at the tertiary level. The failure of referential teaching becomes evident at the interface between school and university also, for with all the emphasis placed on the teaching of reading referential meaning in schools, most students come into the universities with little or no reading ability.

The failure of both schools and universities to prepare students for using English in interaction and communication once they go into professions and other services becomes evident by the need for government institutions and mercantile establishments to provide English classes for their employees.

2.5.4.4. The Importance of a CC Approach in Catering to National Needs:

In present day Sri Lanka an English speaking elite still continues to dominate high ranking positions in employment etc. This is partly due to social issues over which the language teacher has no control, but it is also partly due to English teaching programmes not being successful in preparing the majority of the students to interact and communicate in English and thereby become candidates for the elite. To change this situation which is prejudical to a large number of people and to make proper use of the contributions that could be made to national development by these students who are hampered from making full use of their potential abilities, a change of attitude which turns away from the narrowly subject specific referential teaching of English to a wider communicative interactive approach at all levels is essential. This is especially so at the tertiary level, as university

undergraduates are the potential professional group as well as the potential academic group. A CC approach to English teaching at the tertiary level would also enhance the possibility of such an approach being introduced into the schools, as a fair percentage of graduates become teachers and of these a few are called upon to assume the responsibility of teaching English at the school level.

Though academic matters do come first at the universities, it is not possible to restrict something which has such wider implications as ELT to purely immediate academic concerns at the tertiary level. That ELT at the tertiary level should look beyond academic concerns limited to the time spent by the students at university is supported by government policy statements such as that made by Dr F.C.S.P. Kalpage quoted in 2.5.2.1. The university is but one vital link in the life of the nation, and its concerns have to share national concerns. The universities cater to national needs in providing special training, special courses etc. according to changing needs. ELT is very much a national concern; a national need at the moment and as such, universities are called upon to cater to this national need in a very vital manner. In fact the nature of this national need has already been taken into account by the University of Colombo for instance, in providing proficiency courses for various groups outside the university as outlined in 2.5.3.2.4. In this way, the ELT programme at the University of Colombo cannot be said to be concerned only with the needs of academic reading of the undergraduate population any longer. In entering professions, in becoming teachers of English, university students are not merely called upon to continue academic reading but to use English for interaction and communication at different levels. If ELT at the tertiary level is to be successful, this fact has to be kept in view.

Yet another reason for not restricting ELT to purely academic reading and for teaching with the aim of developing interactive communicative abilities at every level, but especially at the tertiary level is the important role that English as a *lingua franca* could play in Sri Lanka. As outlined in 2.2.4.3. Sinhala rather than English can be regarded as the major *lingua franca* in present day Sri Lanka but most minority groups would prefer to have a neutral medium such as English as the *lingua franca*. If the undergraduates of today belonging to different ethnic groups could be taught to use English for interaction and communication it would possibly lead to English becoming more important in the immediate future. This in turn may possibly contribute to racial harmony

by preventing minority groups from being made to 'lose face' by having to adopt the majority group's language as a *lingua franca*.

As CC encompasses the linguistic and sociolinguistic competencies and speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, CC is a far more appropriate goal to aim for at the tertiary level, than a a narrowly subject specific referential meaning approach. If CC is made the goal of ESL at the tertiary level, students would be motivated to learn English as it would not only help to solve the immediate problem of academic reading, but at the same time provide them with knowledge and skills that would continue to be useful.

2.6. Problems in TESL in Sri Lanka

2.6.1. Lack of Resources:

2.6.1.1. Teachers:

The shortage of trained English teachers mentioned earlier in the chapter needs to be mentioned once again. Many of the teachers called upon to assume the role of English teacher have neither the academic qualifications nor the professional training to fit them for this role (Sri Lanka Foundation Institute 1979:69, Hilton 1983:7).

2.6.1.2. Books and Apparatus:

Apart from the English books published by the government, there is very little in the way of books and other material to supplement teaching courses in schools. Very often all the resources available to the teacher are the text book, a blackboard and chalk. There are no facilities for using tapes, slides or other teaching aids. In most rural schools there are no facilities for language teaching activities at all.

The problems at the universities are basically the same as those in schools. As in schools, a blackboard and chalk form the only available teaching aids. Generally tape slide facilities are not available. At the University of Colombo, some improvement has been made in the form of battery operated tape recorders and the provision of a room where students could listen to teaching tapes. Furthermore, unlike in schools, language teachers at all universities are qualified teachers.

The lack of supplementary reading of the sort that would interest learners is a great disadvantage, as this makes any attempt to cultivate the habit of reading among learners futile. The books which are sometimes gifted by various institutions are often not the type to make learners want to read. An attempt to get learners at the University of Colombo, to read books in the 'ladder' series –a graded series of simplified readers– some years ago, was a complete failure. The teachers themselves found that it was not easy to be enthusiastic about some of these books.

2.6.2. Attitudes towards English Speech and English Speakers:

The strong antipathy that the English language generated because of its associations with imperialism and colonialism, is on the wane now. The sort of prejudice that is encountered now is of a more complex kind, and has to do with being associated with the westernized Sri Lankan elite. In the old days, some of the snobbish members of this elite group were known to ridicule the attempts of those belonging to the lower classes at conversing in English. Their pronunciation especially was held in high disdain (Fernando 1977). The not too fluent users of English are always very conscious of this attitude even now, and especially in the case of learners, it prevents them from gaining fluency through use. Learners are extremely shy of using English in the presence of fluent speakers and this hampers learning.

This attitude is unconsciously shared even by teachers, who while genuinely wanting to do their best for the students, start out with the assumption that these students are never really going to achieve mastery of the language. They genuinely hope to see them improve, but a high degree of proficiency seems such an impossible goal.

2.6.3. Lack of Opportunity to Use English:

This is a major problem in TESL especially in rural areas, where children carry out interaction in and outside the home entirely in their MT. Their contact with the English speaking world outside is very slight, and in the case of these learners, learning English is something done for its own sake, and not with a great deal of enthusiasm. It is only at a much later stage that they begin to develop an interest in learning English.

University students have more opportunities for using the language but

often do not make use of these opportunities for fear of being laughed at. As long as they remain students, apart from the difficulties they have in reading reference material, they are able to get by using only their MT. It is when they graduate and go out into employment, or when they are searching for employment, that they find the lack of proficiency in English a real problem. At the university this leads to the undergraduates falling into two categories: the middle class bilinguals and the rural monolinguals. When the city bred bilinguals interact with monolinguals, it is usually in the MT.

It is interesting to note that learners do not have reservations when it comes to interaction with foreigners. They do not seem to mind making mistakes in such a context as they do in speaking to their peers who are bilingual. The genuine need to converse seems to overrule their shyness when interacting with foreigners. With the expansion of tourism, university students (like all other Sri Lankans) tend to come into contact with native speakers and others who use English as a *lingua franca*. Still, these opportunities for using English are limited.

Learners who come from a rural background with very little contact with the westernized way of life, find it difficult to learn English partly because of the identification of the English language with western culture. Not only do the English speaking elite speak a different language when they speak English, but they also speak about things that are alien to the learners; theatre, musicals, recitals, parties, western films and TV shows etc.

Though university undergraduates in general tend to be highly 'cultured', their knowledge and appreciation of the indigenous culture do not equip them to deal with the westernized culture they encounter in the towns. Their lack of knowledge of the topics that seem to form the conversations carried on in English by town bred bilinguals, make them hesitate even more, about using English in social interaction where opportunities for using English do arise. However it is interesting to note that this gap seems to be narrowing in some ways, as a common link is being established with the advent of TV and computers. With TV becoming accessible to more people in rural areas, English telecasts are watched by more monolinguals. Though rural folk would not usually listen to English broadcasts on the radio, they do not restrict themselves only to Sinhala/Tamil telecasts. This may be because of the large number of English telecasts, but on the other hand it may be because they are

able to appreciate a visual medium in spite of the language difficulties. Access to computers is still relatively restricted, but once again the interest in computers, especially in relation to computer software and computer games available only in English is well on the way to becoming common ground.

2.6.4. The Additional Problem of a Nativized Context:

Surprisingly the nativized use of English in Sri Lanka can also be regarded as a problem in ESL. Many educated Sri Lankan speakers of English, tend to resort to 'nativized' expressions in casual speech. The learners who hear certain nativized expressions in the speech of people around them are not in a position to see the differences between these expressions and genuine errors. This may be a factor that contributes to interlanguage fossilization. The learner possibly sees no difference between his/her own interlanguage and the nativized expressions s/he hears, hence the need to make the learners aware of the diglossic situation that exists in Sri Lankan usage. Especially at the tertiary level, not only would this lead to better understanding and increased proficiency but would also increase the learner's interest in the language.

Neither the nativized variety nor the colloquial language is ever consciously taught in the classroom. Bilinguals who 'pick up' the language from their family and peers, tend to pick up the colloquialisms and learn to use the appropriate form of speech in appropriate contexts. The learners who come from a monolingual background are taught only the standard written forms and if and when they do achieve proficiency, their speech still tends to be stilted and unnatural.

2.7. Conclusions

The English language in Sri Lanka, as in other Asian and African countries where it has become nativized and come to perform a role of vital importance in major spheres of activity, enjoys a position different from that in countries where it is merely a foreign language. Not only does it continue to be important in such spheres as business, administration and learning, but it also performs certain intranational functions as opposed to international functions. A knowledge of English is regarded as an asset and is considered a means towards social advancement. However, unlike in the colonial period when it was regarded as a first language by those who used it, at the present time it is regarded as a valuable second language.

The social position, professional prestige and often the material prosperity enjoyed by most fluent bilinguals continue to attach to English a sense of elitism. In this post independence era, Sri Lankan speakers who are unable or unwilling to speak their MT fluently and profess fluency only in English are not regarded with favour. What is deplored in such cases is not the speakers command of English, but his/her lack of fluency in his/her MT. What the majority of people are in favour of seems to be bilingualism. The Sri Lankan government has in fact taken steps to encourage not only Sinhala/Tamil English bilingualism, but also Sinhala Tamil bilingualism. This has been in the interest of racial harmony.

ELT is a major concern of educational authorities in Sri Lanka. The interest in this field becomes evident by glancing over a bibliography of published materials on the subject. *The selected guide to the literature on English language teaching in Sri Lanka* compiled by Sally (1980) lists 209 publications dealing with ELT in Sri Lanka. Teachers and educationists belonging to different schools of thought are represented in this bibliography. The vast amount of publications testify to the need felt by those involved in ELT to discuss their problems and share their views. On the whole, it pinpoints to the importance of ESL in the curriculum at all different levels of education.

The need for the improvement of English teaching is felt very acutely at the tertiary level because English affects the students' academic needs and also their future prospects of employment and higher studies and their general prospects of 'doing well' in the future. Because university undergraduates form the potential professional group and the potential academic group of the future, it is essential to equip them to meet the challenge which has evolved out of the nations' involvement in world-wide commerce, tourism etc. and also by the science and technology of the modern world. English is becoming increasingly important as a national language and is being used more and more in both government and mercantile establishments and in colleges and universities. The need for using English for interaction and communication is becoming more evident in all these areas. The role English could play in easing racial conflicts by becoming a neutral *lingua franca* is also worthy of consideration. Whichever of these types of language use is taken into account, the need for interactive and communicative English becomes apparent. This need is not catered for adequately in the type of courses provided at present. Since the universities are involved in a vital manner in this issue of national importance

they have a responsibility to cater to this urgent national need.

In a climate where the educational authorities are anxious to improve the quality of ELT, potential learners increase in number, and the need to learn English has become an accepted fact, any investigation which provides a better understanding of the problems that underlie ELT and which provides some guidance as to how it can be improved would be beneficial. Because of the lack of resources and other such problems investigations into ESL in Sri Lanka have been minimal. This investigation aims to remedy this situation in however small a way.

Notes

(1) Act No. 33 of 1956
(2) (Extracts from the English courses for use in Sri Lankan schools by the Department of Educational Publications, 1968 and 1970 respectively -quoted in Kandiah 1981:72-74).

> (a) Punchi Singho is a farmer. His life is very interesting. He gets up in the morning. He takes his mammoty and goes to his field. He works in his field in the morning. He works there in the afternoon too. At noon his wife takes a plate of rice and curry to the field. Then he stops work. He sits under a shady tree and eats his lunch. He works after lunch too. He stops work at six o'clock in the evening. Then he bathes in the river and goes home.
>
> (b) All the people of Ambana are farmers. Ambana is a small village in the hill country. There are only about fifty families in Ambana. These people celebrate the New Year. They have money at this time. They go to the town to buy their cloth and presents. Then they get ready for the New Year. They make oil cakes, kokis and milk rice. They make swings for their children. On New Year's day they light their hearth at the auspicious time. They look in one direction, light the hearth and recite a religious verse. They play games, ride on the swings and wear their new clothes. They go to the temple in the evening.

CHAPTER 3

'ON COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE'[1]

3.1. Introduction

As stated in chapter 1 above the main hypotheses that underlie this investigation are that:

1. Making Communicative Competence (CC) the goal would contribute to the improvement of ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka

2. Since CC incorporates both grammatical and sociolinguistic rules of use, attention should be paid to teaching sociolinguistic rules of use in addition to grammar.

3. Since sociolinguistic rules or the rules of use are influenced by cultural factors, cultural awareness is essential for achieving CC.

4. The teaching programme should be geared towards providing sociolinguistic knowledge and improving the ability to use this knowledge through use, by providing opportunities for use.

The background to the investigation, the ESL situation in Sri Lanka with reference to the historical background and the present day status of ESL was discussed at length in chapter 2.

In this chapter, the theoretical concept of CC which underlies the hypotheses will be discussed. In the next chapter the concept of culture in relation to CC will be taken up.

This chapter will attempt to discuss what is understood by CC and the relationship of this theory to language teaching and to review the literature dealing with these aspects. In section 3.2, the origins of the development of the theory of CC will be discussed and the literature which records this development will be reviewed. Section 3.3 will attempt to set out the developments in CC theory in relation to EFL/ESL with reference to the literature. Avenues for further research in searching for an 'ideal theory' of CC will be briefly discussed in relation to existing theories (3.4). The impact that CC has had on syllabus design, and the concept of 'communicative language teaching' will be discussed in detail (3.5), and finally, the way in which CC

theory could help to advance ESL in Sri Lanka will be outlined (3.6).

On examining the large body of writing on the theory of CC, it becomes clear that the theory of CC has evolved and developed a great deal since its introduction. Because of divergent interpretations of the term, it has been described as an 'umbrella concept' (Alatis 1981:8) and as a 'buzzword' (Canale 1983:2). Apart from the many interpretations of the meaning of the term itself, there are also various interpretations of the theory as set out by Hymes. Referring to Hymes' argument against the Chomskyan emphasis on the analysis of the linguistic system of an ideal speaker hearer whose internalized linguistic competence could be studied apart from the context in which the language is actually used, Wolfson points out that,

> 'the term CC has gained currency in Applied Linguistics. However, the argument which the term communicative competence itself was intended to symbolize has been lost sight of' (1983:82).

The body of literature is so vast and varied that it becomes extremely confusing as to whether all the writers who state that they are talking about the theory of CC, are in fact talking about the same thing. While there are some who feel that though the theory of CC is very important, it is still in its infancy (Carrell and Konneker 1981:17), there are others who express certainty as to what CC is. Miyamura (1979:17) states that,

> 'CC *is* the ability to formulate and produce messages that effectively and accurately convey the locutionary force (semantic content) and the illocutionary force (psychological content) of one's communicative efforts and the concomitant ability to appropriately interpret messages produced by others' (emphasis mine).

Jakobovits states that,

> 'from community integration comes intentionality from this comes spontaneity which is communicative competence' (1982:20).

Paulston tries to define it in simple terms when she says,

> 'On a superficial level, communicative competence may be

> simply defined as tact and good manners, and people not sharing the same system, will consider others rude and tactless' (1979:2).

Apart from the various different interpretations of the concept of CC as first proposed by Hymes (1967), there are also other terms, used to define theories of CC which are different to Hymes' concept only in minor details. The term 'sociolinguistic competence' which Ervin-Tripp uses in order to 'exclude the many forms and skill in non-linguistic communication' (quoted in Paulston 1974:349) and Menan's term 'interactional competence' once again quoted by Paulston, are examples of different terms used to define theories in essence similar to Hymes' CC theory. In the same way, the dichotomy proposed by Edmondson (1981:274); 'communicative competence' and 'social competence' do not in essentials differ from CC as proposed by Hymes.

Thus, the term CC is used to describe concepts which are essentially different from the original concept, and at the same time there are different terms used to describe concepts which are not very different from the original theory of CC, thus causing a great deal of confusion.

The confusion caused by this multiplicity of meanings given to and understood by CC is discussed by Wieman and Backlund (1980:186). They feel that,

> 'this lack of definitional and theoretical consistency, while common to concepts in their developmental stages, points to a need for further clarification and elaboration of this concept, if a useful theory is to be developed'.

They further go on to state that,

> 'The orderly development of any new theory demands clear generally acceptable definitions for the key words associated with that theory... 'communicative competence' does not enjoy such a definition. The difficulty appears to stem from the wide range of definitions of the word 'competence' found in the literature, which seem to follow from two perspectives: cognitive and behavioural. The choice of perspective and definition is central to the application of the concept' (ibid.).

Apart from the different ways in which cognitive and behavioural scientists approach the term 'communicative competence', the different perspectives from

which this term is viewed by educationists has caused further confusion. This issue will be taken up at a further point in the chapter.

3.2. The Development of the Communicative Competence Theory

3.2.1. Origins of the Term 'Communicative Competence':

The term CC has its origins in the distinction that Chomsky makes between the 'competence' and 'performance' of a native speaker of a language. As Canale and Swain (1980:3) point out in their illuminating article, this distinction was introduced into modern linguistics because of the methodological need for studying language in an abstract manner.

Chomsky uses these terms in both a weak sense and a strong sense (Campbell and Wales 1970:242-260, Canale and Swain 1980:3-4). In the weak sense, competence describes the grammatical and other knowledge of the speaker/hearer, and performance refers to the use of that knowledge in real situations. In the stronger sense of Chomsky's term, a theory of competence is equated to a theory of grammar as it states that,

> 'Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random and characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance' (Chomsky 1965:3).

where psychological factors involved in actual language use and performance are considered as being irrelevant and unrelated to competence. However, even the theory of performance as defined by Chomsky, does not take into account the various sociological factors involved in speech perception and production, as it is concerned mainly with psychological factors; such as memory limitation, distractions, shift of attention and interest etc. The omission to take sociological factors into consideration is noted and commented on both by psychologists and linguists alike, as pointed out by Campbell and Wales (ibid.).

The reaction to Chomsky's strong view of competence took the form of a counter theory which was introduced by Hymes in 1966 at the Research

Planning Conference on Language Development Among Disadvantaged Children, held at the Ferkauf Graduate School at Yeshiva University (June 7–8, 1966). With reference to the disadvantaged children who were the theme of the conference, Hymes pointed out that Chomsky's theory of competence was in effect a 'declaration of irrelevance' (Hymes 1967:1). Hymes' claim was lent support by the psychologists Campbell and Wales, for whom,

> 'by far the most important linguistic ability is that of being able to produce and understand utterances which are not so much *grammatical* but, more important *appropriate to the context in which they were made* (their emphasis) (1970:247).

At this point both sociologist and psychologists were of one mind that a theory of competence had an important effect on the way in which language acquisition was viewed and therefore, on education in general. They were also agreed that the actual use of language needed to be considered as part of the theory of competence, and also that 'appropriateness in context' governed by sociological considerations was an indispensable part of a theory of competence.

3.2.2. Hymes' Theory of Communicative Competence:

3.2.2.1. Need for a New Theory: Limitations of the Transformational Generative Theory:

Hymes' basic arguments on the limitations of the Transformational Generative Theory (TGT) of competence were based on the facts that,

1. TGT was based on the competence of an ideal speaker hearer who does not normally exist in the real world.
2. Socio-cultural factors were completely absent even from the theory of performance in which these factors might have had a place.
3. Performance was presented as being debased; an imperfect manifestation of an underlying system.

As opposed to Chomsky's ideal speaker hearer in a homogeneous community, Hymes launches his theory from the opposite pole by considering an example of 'differential competence in a heterogeneous society'. He quotes Bloomfield's

account of a young Menomini:

> 'White Thunder, a man of around forty, speaks less English than Menomini, and that is a strong indictment, for his Menomini is atrocious. His vocabulary is small; his inflections are barbarous; he constructs sentences of a few threadbare models. He may be said to speak no language tolerably. His case is not uncommon among the younger men, even when they speak but little English'

and contrasts White Thunder's competence with that of Red Cloud Woman, who,

> 'speaks a beautiful and highly idiomatic Menomini... (and) speaks Ojibwa and Potawatomi fluently... Linguisticaly, she would correspond to a highly educated American woman who spoke, say French and Italian in addition to the very best type of cultivated, idiomatic English' (Bloomfield 1927, quoted in Hymes 1967:5-6).

Against this background of differential competence, Hymes sets a hypothetical child who is able to 'produce and understand any and all grammatical sentences of a language'. Such a child states Hymes,

> 'would likely to be institutionalized. Even more so if not only sentences but also speech and silence was random, unpredictable. For that matter, a person who chooses occasions and sentences that are suitable, but is master of only fully grammatical sentences, is at the best a bit odd.'

He states that,

> 'some occasions call for being *appropriately* ungrammatical' (1967:9) (my emphasis).

He is supported in his stand by Langendoen among others:

> 'We say that an expression is *acceptable* if it may be used spontaneously in a given context, and that it is grammatical if it may be judged, independent of context, to be part of the language. It is easy to construct sentences that are grammatical but unacceptable in any context... conversely, many ungrammatical sentences are acceptable in certain contexts, and their deviance from full grammaticality may go completely unnoticed. Rebecca West has been cited for the following

> striking example: 'A copy of the universe is not what is required of art, one of the damned thing is ample.' The first paragraph of Dickens' *Bleak House* which consists entirely of sentence fragments, is an even more spectacular case of this sort' (1973:199).

'Appropriateness' can depend on various things, such as communicative situation, context, discourse type etc. Deviant grammatical forms and lexical forms too are more prevalent in literary texts, where these forms have either been consciously 'coined' by the writer/poet for his/her particular purpose or where these have been inspired by a particular type of experience. The artistry of these literary efforts often depend on these very forms -e.g the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins. 'Appropriateness' is one of the most important features in Hymes' theory of CC. It is considered as being one of the four kinds of judgements that should be taken into account if an adequate theory is to be developed, discussed below.

3.2.2.2. Questions to be Considered in Relation to a Theory of Communicative Competence:

Finding the judgements of grammaticality in relation to competence and acceptability in relation to performance not adequate for a theory of competence which takes into account both language users and language use, Hymes suggests four types of questions that should be considered in relation to such a theory.

1. whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
2. whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed* and what its doing entails (ibid:15).

In summing up, Hymes states that,

> 'the goal of a broad theory of competence can be said to be to *show the ways* in which the systematically possible, the

> feasible and the appropriate are linked to produce and interpret *actually occurring behaviour* (ibid:19) (my emphasis).

It is important to note that Hymes is not merely limiting his theory to *analyzing* the judgements that a communicatively competent user is able to make about pre-existing norms of behaviour as Widdowson suggests (1983:24), but is thinking in terms of a theory which would explain how these judgements operate in the production and interpretation of actually occurring behaviour (actual use).

The first of the four types of judgements that a user has to make is to do with systemic possibility, which in terms of language is grammaticality. The user would draw upon his/her knowledge of the structures of the language, in judging whether something is formally possible. In order to distinguish psycholinguistic factors from the sociolinguistic which are lumped together under the term 'acceptability' in relation to performance in Chomsky's linguistic theory, Hymes uses the term 'feasible'. Feasibility judgements are to do with the means of implementation available. For judgements regarding sociolinguistic factors relating to context, Hymes uses the term 'appropriateness' borrowed from cultural anthropology. The fourth type of judgement is in relation to actual occurrence and the results brought about by being actually done (what the doing entails). Hymes stresses the importance of considering actual occurrence and the effects of occurrence in a theory of CC. The question of 'appropriateness' is discussed at length by Hymes in relation to the development of tacit knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions.

3.2.2.3. The Sociolinguistic Aspects of CC in Hymes' Theory:

Going on to consider a normal child's competence, Hymes states that,

> 'a normal child acquires knowledge not only of grammatical sentences but also of appropriate ones. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about, with whom, when and where and in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence is moreover, integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interaction of language with other codes of communication conduct' (1967:10).

What Hymes stresses is the importance of appropriateness in language use and the way in which appropriateness is linked closely with social factors. He points out that social factors are important not only when they interfere or restrict the grammatical, but as a positive productive aspect in itself. He further emphasizes this by stating that,

> 'there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (ibid.).

This emphasis of the importance of the sociolinguistic aspect of competence and of the underlying social factors that influence language use is one of the most important aspects of Hymes' theory. Hymes discusses the way in which socio-cultural factors affect language use and the way in which socio-cultural features manifest themselves in linguistic behaviour in relation to judgements of appropriateness (ibid.). He discusses the way in which children learn very early to match their language use to social requirements and quotes examples of culture conditioned language behaviour.

> 'They come to be able to recognize... appropriate and inappropriate interrogative behaviour (e.g among the Araucanians of Chile, that to repeat a question is to insult, among the Tzeltal of Chiapas, Mexico, that a direct question is not properly asked (and to be answered "Nothing"), among the Tobu of Argentina, that a direct answer to a first question implies that the answerer has no time to talk, a vague answer that the question will be answered directly the second time, and that talk can continue)' (ibid:11).

Sociolinguistic competence is linked with the use dimension in a way that linguistic competence is not. Linguistic competence can be gauged not only in relation to use but also in relation to formal grammars, whereas sociolinguistic competence can only be gauged in relation to use. In sociolinguistic competence, tacit social knowledge manifests itself and Hymes demonstrates how the expectations, values etc. of a society influence language users of that society from an early age, in moulding their language choice in the form of rules of use.

Hymes stresses the importance of sociolinguistic competence as an inseparable part of communicative competence by pointing out that the rules

of use are not something acquired after the rules of grammar, or in addition. Thus, 'competence for use is part of the same developmental matrix as competence for grammar' (ibid:11).

3.2.3. Aspects of Hymes' Theory that have Given Rise to Conflicting Views:

In the light of the metamorphoses that the theory of CC has undergone since its introduction by Hymes, it is interesting to go back and reconsider Hymes' views in relation to the areas that have led to a conflict of ideas among both linguists and educationists. The different aspects of the theory which have led to conflicting points of view could be broadly summarized as follows:

1. Is performance in the sense of ability to use and in the sense of actual use, part of the theory of CC?
2. Are there degrees of competence?
3. Can CC in a language be attained by anyone other than a native speaker of that language?
4. Does CC simply mean getting your meaning across?
5. Are linguistic competence and CC two different things or is it possible to be communicatively competent while not being linguistically competent?
6. At what point in his/her life can a native speaker be regarded as possessing perfect CC?
7. Is CC such an idealized condition that it cannot be achieved by anyone at all; even a native speaker?

It would be absurd to think that Hymes' foresaw all these problems or that he had thought out all the possible aspects of the theory, when he first introduced it. He states very clearly that,

> 'this most general level of the notion of communicative competence implies a concern with a corresponding theory of description; and more needs to be said and learned about both' (1967:28).

Still, it is interesting to note that Hymes directly or indirectly brings into his discussion most if not all the issues that seem to be crucial today.

3.2.3.1. 'Performance' and 'Ability to Use':

To take the two conflicting views regarding performance as ability to use and actual use, it is possible to see from the three types of 'models' that Hymes considers in his pre-publication draft of the 1967 paper, that he regards ability to use and actual use as two parts of the proposed models. However, at that point he says that it is far too early to decide which would be the most appropriate model. From Hymes' standpoint, there seems to be no doubt at all that CC and linguistic competence (ability to use) and communicative performance and linguistic performance (actual use) are interrelated but separate entities. However, unlike Chomsky, who bases his theory of competence on an ideal situation, Hymes bases CC on the actual performance of language users.

Table 3.1

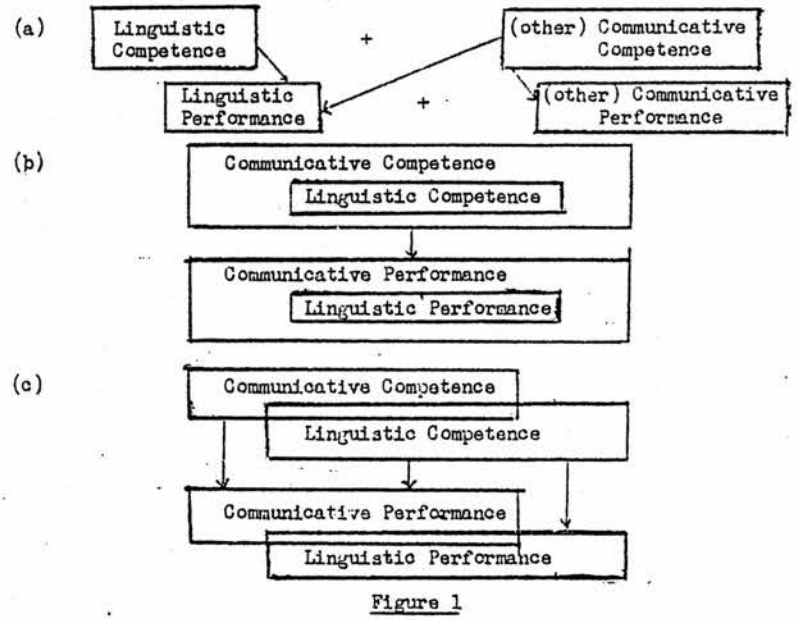


Figure 1

Reproduced from the 1967 paper

Linguistic competence is included as an *essential* part in Hymes' theory of CC, as what is formally possible is decided by the grammar.

> 'Sociolinguistic and communicative competence cannot be studied without reference to grammatical competence' (1967:32).

In effect it is not possible to talk of CC without linguistic competence. He also goes on to state explicitly that competence is dependent on *both* (tacit) *knowledge* and (ability for) *use* (1967:16).

In reviewing the subsequent literature, one comes across those who following Chomsky equate ability with competence and performance with actual use. Thus Kempson equates CC theory with performance theory.

> 'A theory which characterizes the regularities of language is a competence theory; a theory which characterizes the interaction between that linguistic characterization and all the other factors which determine the full gamut of regularities of communication is a theory of performance... a theory characterizing a speaker's ability to use his language appropriately in context, a theory of communicative competence... is simply a performance theory' (1977:54-55, quoted in Canale and Swain 1980:6).

Halliday (1970:145) rejects the distinction between competence and performance altogether as being irrelevant or misleading. Both Hymes (1967,1970, 1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) make a distinction between ability to use and actual use. Gumperz likewise, takes the same stand when he describes CC as,

> 'what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings' (Gumperz 1972:Preface to Directions in Linguistics).

Saville-Troike draws attention to the need to

> 'distinguish between receptive and productive dimensions' (1982:25).

Ervin-Tripp cites an example of black children who are

> 'capable of comprehending standard English they have heard without always being able to produce it consistently' (1971:31)

in support of her idea that there is a difference between what she calls 'receptive' and 'productive' competence. This dichotomy, once again, seems to be related to competence and performance. However, according to Hymes, the

difference is not between receptive and productive ability (both are part of CC as the ability to use knowledge of each of the 4 suggested parameters) but between the ability to use and actual instances of use which may be influenced by psychological and other factors. Kelly (1981:16) while implying the distinction between CC and actual performance feels that performance is more important than CC where EFL classes are concerned.

Hymes' claim that ability to use should be included in a theory of CC is rejected by Canale and Swain, on the grounds that, by introducing the notion of ability to use as an essential component of CC, one allows the logical possibility of language users having 'linguistic deficits' (or 'communicative deficits') –i.e inadequate language competence resulting in social class and power class differences (1980:70). It is interesting to note that taking this type of differential competence into consideration is precisely what Hymes sets out to do. As to the 'deficits' in the sense that Bernstein means it (1964 and elsewhere) and Canale and Swain mean it here, it need not lead to a social class or power difference. As Hudson in agreement with Cazden points out, language deficits could well be a phenomenon which cuts across all levels of society.

> 'Some people have a 'deficit' in their communicative competence with respect to certain types of situations, but the sting is taken out of the word if it is seen that such deficits are spread right across society, and that each of us has his or her own particular range of deficits –though 'gaps' would be a better term (Cazden 1970)' (Hudson 1980:227).

The distinction that need to be made in a theory of CC, is the distinction between the ability to use and actual use. While the former should form an intrinsic part of the theory, the latter could not fit into a theory of CC as it involves individual variation and psychological and other factors which once again differ from person to person, and from situation to situation.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out that the existence of differential competence, the differences in the ability to use should be taken into account. The other salient point is that in formulating a theory of CC, empirical investigation into actual performance is the only way in which judgements could be made about competence (Wolfson 1983:82).

3.2.3.2. Degrees of Competence:

As to whether there are degrees of competence, Hymes' paper certainly seem to suggest that there are such degrees. With reference to the four parameters that he suggests, Hymes states that both knowledge and the ability to use apply to all four, and in relation to ability to use he says,

> 'Certainly it may be the case that individuals differ with regard to ability to use knowledge of each: to interpret, differentiate etc.. The specifications of *ability for use* as part of competence allows for the role of non-cognitive factors, such as motivation, as partly determining competence' (1967:16).

Claims made by some educationists that CC is something that is entirely beyond the scope of anyone other than a native speaker, (Williams 1979:18-21) and the idea that CC is somehow beyond the scope of anyone including native speakers (Holec 1980:30) is contrary to Hymes' view. Since Hymes' theory was in direct opposition to an idealized situation and was advanced in relation to the education of disadvantaged children, it seems a justifiable claim that CC as Hymes meant it (as the most general term for the capabilities of a person) is attainable both by native and non-native speakers of a language, perhaps in different degrees. Hymes' theory takes into account the heterogeneity in a native speaker population. In his discussion of CC in relation to education, he stresses the importance of considering this aspect.

> 'Clearly work with children, and with the place of language in education, requires a theory that can deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence, the constitutive role of socio-cultural features -that can take into account such phenomena such as White Thunder, socio-economic differences, multilingual mastery, expressive values, socially determined perception, contextual styles and shared norms for the evaluation of variables' (ibid:9).

Heterogeneity in language use is an established fact in most multi-racial communities. In the same way differential competence accounts for differences within a particular ethnic group in a language community and between different ethnic groups that make up that community. For example, in relation to Britain, it would be possible to think of differential competence among the English or the Scots on the one hand, and differential competence

to be found between these groups and the Asians, West Indians and East Europeans who also form part of the English speaking community. The notion of a CC continuum where heterogeneity and differential ability has a place makes it possible to apply Hymes' theory to non-native speakers (NNS) in a way that a theory of ideal competence could not be applied. Each native speaker would differ in relation to his/her place in the CC continuum as individuals differ in their knowledge of the language and their ability to use it. Hymes agrees with Sapir that 'every individual's language is a distinct psychological entity in itself' (1967:31) and considers competence 'in part a personal matter... and in part a matter of social group' (ibid.).

Hymes also considers the possibility of levels of competence in relation to the 'goals of the disadvantaged' (1967:25). He considers the possibility of three levels of competence: a 'minimal' level, a 'maximal' level and a 'medial' level. The possibility of there being levels of competence is a very useful concept when applied to EFL/ESL situations, and therefore once again demonstrates the possibility of applying Hymes' theory to NNS.

3.2.3.3. Communicative Competence as 'Innate Ability':

Another controversial issue that has great significance to ESL/EFL situations, is the question whether CC is an innate ability; something that is acquired only in childhood, together with linguistic mastery, or whether it could be acquired as an adult. In other words, is there an optimum age by which a native speaker has acquired perfect CC? Any suggestion that CC is innate would pose the question whether it would not apply to any number of languages, instead of being limited only to the mother tongue (MT). On the other hand, this takes it to an abstract plane which is not in keeping with the theory as proposed by Hymes. If CC could be acquired only in childhood, it would be beyond the reach of many ESL/EFL learners. There are indeed those who state that only a small percentage of ESL/EFL users acquire 'native speaker competence' (Ho 1986:35-36). However, it is important to notice that when Ho speaks of 'competence' he does not mean CC in the Hymesian sense, but in a Chomskyan sense, as he uses ideal pronunciation among other things as a yard stick for judging non-native speaker competence. If ideal pronunciation is used as a yard stick for judging competence, then many native speakers would also be found lacking in 'competence'. Apart from the fact that CC as defined by Hymes, does not deal with an idealized situation, the fact that there is

differential competence seems to posit the ability to acquire it early or late.

Hymes' own comments on this issue are of extreme interest. Hymes states that, the rules of use 'are not a late grafting', and also 'competency for use is part of the same developmental matrix as competence for grammar' (1967:11). He also goes on to say that CC is by no means static.

> 'No child has perfect knowledge and mastery of the communicative means of his community. In particular, differential competence has itself a developmental history in one's life. The matrix formed in childhood continues to develop and change throughout life with respect to both sentence structure and their uses' (1967:20).

He also goes on to discuss a 'long' and 'short' range of competency which because of its relevance to language teaching seems to be worth quoting in full.

> 'Perhaps one should contrast a 'long' and 'short' range view of competency, the short range view being interested primarily in understanding innate capacity as unfolded during the first years of life, and the long range view in understanding the continuing socialization and change of competence through life. In any case here is one major aspect in which a theory of competence must go beyond the notion of ideal fluency in a homogeneous community, if it is to be applicable to work with disadvantaged children and with children in educational systems in much of the world. When one is dealing with children whose primary language or language variety is different from that of their school, with intent to change or add, one is presupposing the possibility that competence that has unfolded in a natural way can be altered, perhaps drastically so, by new social factors' (1967:20).

CC as Hymes sees it at this point is not achieved overnight. Also CC theory is to be regarded as a theory that takes into account differential competence in a native speaker population, which in turn makes it possible to consider CC as something which could be acquired by non-native speakers, as heterogeneity could include non-native speaker/hearers as well as native speaker/hearers.

3.2.4. Subsequent Developments in the Theory of Communicative Competence:

Since the concept of CC was introduced, linguists have tried to redefine and explicate it in many different ways. An area of ever increasing interest has been the components of CC. No two linguists seem to be in complete agreement as to what the components of CC are. Hymes indicated that it comprised of several different things when he stated that there are several sectors of communicative competence of which the grammatical is one (1967:15). Each investigator seems to come up with fresh components that need to be included, and each investigator's notion of what should form part of CC is coloured by his/her particular area of interest; such as semantics or pragmatics, psychology, ESP, EFL/ESL or the ethnography of speaking. Thus Beebe (1981:139) feels that with regard to the second language of bilingual children,

> '.....dialect code switching is a central and statistically significant communication strategy used among bilingual children in their second language, and that is therefore a part of their CC'.

It is also interesting to note that when Beebe talks of 'their CC', he seems to imply that the CC of bilingual children is different to that of others. This is an attitude shared by many educationists discussing CC in relation to ESL/EFL or bilingualism. However, the present writer feels that Wieman and Backlund are justified when they state that,

> 'To the extent the classroom is a salient social environment the same *general communicative competence* will be applicable there as they are applicable in other contexts' (Their emphasis) (1980:186).

Patowski (1980:462) discussing CC in relation to the sensitive period for the acquisition of syntax in a second language, considers the ability to distinguish between regional accent variation as a standard property of native speaker competence. Canale and Swain who consider CC in relation to SL teaching think it necessary to include an extra component called 'strategic competence' which is the means by which a breakdown in communication or the lack of vocabulary or partially learned structures are compensated for by the second language learner. According to Canale and Swain,

> 'Communicative competence is composed of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and communicative strategies or what we refer to as strategic competence' (1980:27).

Subsequently another component; 'discourse competence' has been described by Canale (1983:6,9) as an additional component of CC bringing the number of components to four.

The theoretical framework of CC adopted by Bachman and Palmer (1982:449-464), is a revised version of Canale and Swain's model comprising of three components which Bachman and Palmer label as grammatical competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

Even those who feel that Hymes' theory is a helpful framework on which to build ESL or EFL syllabuses, are usually of the mind that there are however other components that need to be incorporated. Thus, Paulston in her model for language teaching includes a component which she calls 'communicative performance', which carries a different meaning to performance in the Chomskyan or Hymesian sense, as it is meant to designate communication 'which carries no distinctive social significance' (Paulston 1974:350). This type of situation she points out is limited to the world of the classroom. She includes another component which she terms 'communicative ambiguity', 'where different social meanings are encoded in or decoded from the same linguistic expression' (ibid.).

Saville-Troike (1982) who basically agrees with Hymes' categories of rules of grammar and rules of use as components of CC, feels that it is possible to give an exhaustive list of the 'functions' of language which could be considered as composing CC.

> 'CC extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or who may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to, how one may talk to persons of different status and roles, what appropriate non-verbal gestures are appropriate in various contexts, what the routines for turn taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer and decline assistance or co-operation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline, and the like -in short everything involving the use of language and other communicative dimensions in particular social settings' (Saville-Troike 1982:22-23).

Saville-Troike is probably right in considering that all these abilities form part of a native speaker's competence, but there is danger in trying to list such abilities. For one thing it is a questionable procedure to try to spell out all the different abilities which comprise CC, as such a list would become inexhaustible, and also, no two speakers would agree as to the feasibility of including this or the other function or ability. On the other hand, with this kind of listing CC would be a term that would describe the abilities of very few people in the real world, and thus we would be back at the point where Hymes began. The fact that this type of CC theory would be utterly irrelevant to ESL/EFL situations need not be emphasized.

3.3. Developments in Communicative Competence Theory in Relation to ESL/EFL

3.3.1. The Differences in the Views of Sociolinguists and Language Teachers:

When considering the divided opinions regarding the components of CC; as to what should be included in the theory, what should be excluded and so forth, it is possible to see that these differences largely stem from two main groups of people. The views reviewed in the previous sections reveal the differences in the thinking of sociolinguists and language teachers. The reason for this division of opinion becomes evident on examining the work of researchers working on ESL and EFL.

While there are arguments for and against the notion that first and second language acquisition are basically different, most educationists tend to regard SL/FL learners as being basically different from other learners. This belief leads them to think that CC as recognized by sociolinguists is not a sensible goal in ESL/EFL, and therefore, that CC theory should be modified in some way to meet the needs of their different groups of learners. There is also a conviction on the part of Applied Linguists that reliance on the authority of models of linguistic description can be counter productive in pedagogic matters -e.g Widdowson (1979:171,234, 1983:23).

In a footnote to a discussion of CC as it is represented in Savignon's writings, Valdman states that CC as first introduced by sociolinguists

> 'represent a high level of attainment indeed, so high, in fact, as to be beyond the reasonable expectations of usual general foreign language learners' (Valdman 1978:568).

Helt states in essence the same thing when he writes that,

> 'we must distinguish between sociolinguistic communicative competence and foreign language methodology directed towards the imparting of primary communication skills, particularly since the former concept encompasses much more sophisticated language manipulation than the latter. Indeed the sociolinguistic application of the term seems to aim primarily at 'finished' language learners' (Helt 1982:255).

The existence of this type of attitude on the part of educationists involved in ESL/EFL does not imply that all language teachers feel this way. In fact there is a sizable proportion of language teachers who share the sociolinguistic point of view of CC -e.g Cazden (1973:137). The reason why the present writer feels that CC theory is an appropriate basis for ESL syllabus design is because it is not an idealized linguistic description, because it helps to explain some of the problems encountered in ESL and also provides insights into possible solutions to these problems.

3.3.1.1. Referential Meaning in Relation to Communicative Competence in ESL/EFL:

Paulston (1974, 1976) discusses the way in which the views of language teachers and psychologists on the one hand, and sociolinguists and anthropologists on the other hand have diverged. In her 1974 paper, she states that,

> 'it is rather typical of language teachers and psychologists... that they tend to equate communicative competence with the ability to carry out linguistic interaction in the target language... sociolinguists and anthropologists are careful to distinguish referential meanings of language forms from the social meaning that language also carries' (Paulston 1974:348).

This emphasis on the importance of referential meaning has resulted in the popularity of the view, that, getting one's meaning across; 'ability to convey information' (Politzer and McGroarty 1985:103) is basically what a learner's CC comprises. There is also the belief that this does not necessarily involve linguistic competence, or sociolinguistic competence.

Savignon (1972, 1973, 1975 & 1976) is one of the major proponents of this

theory, even though she does not explicitly state that linguistic competence is not necessary. Her views are revealed in such statements as,

> 'We respond to *what* is said, not *how* it is said' (1973:7).

What she states here seems to be at variance with other statements she makes such as the one given below. Discussing the attributes of the most rewarding language games, Savignon makes the point that,

> 'Success in playing the game depends not on any arbitrary criterion of linguistic accuracy (i.e. spelling, pronunciation, verb placement etc.) but on the ability to use the language to discuss, to explore, to deceive, to explain, to reveal, to conceal, to cajole, to describe, to enact... in sum, to engage in the whole range of interpersonal transactions in which we are involved daily in our native language. Herein lies the authenticity of the exchange' (1973:10).

This point is directly in contrast to what she states earlier. Most of the language acts that Savignon talks about (e.g. to conceal, to cajole etc.) depend more on *how* it is said than on *what* is said. She considers *how* it is said, or the manner in which something is said, purely in terms of grammaticality (spelling, pronunciation, verb placement etc.) but omits to take into account the fact that *how* or *manner* also includes *appropriateness* -the rules of use and conventions- and thus fails to see that *how* something is said is often more important than *what* is said.

The Communicational Project in South India (Brumfit 1984a:233-241, Johnson 1984:135-144, Beretta and Davies 1985:121-127) is yet another example of teaching methodology which emphasizes the importance of conveying referential meaning. In spite of the title, the concerns of the Communicational Teaching Project are mainly referential (Lukman 1982:217-225). According to Prabhu the originator of the project,

> 'Grammar construction by the learner is an unconscious process which is best facilitated by bringing about in the learner a preoccupation with meaning, saying and doing' (1982:2 quoted in Beretta and Davies 1985:121).

The referential concern is further emphasized by Lukman when she says that the object of Communicational Teaching is,

> 'not that of mastering the interface between linguistic and social life. On the contrary, the attempt is to analyse the abilities required in the situation and of training in those abilities rather than in the appropriate socio-cultural dimensions' (1982:217).

The problem solving activities advocated by the Communicational project are undoubtedly useful for skill development, but then, teachers have always believed in this as provision for this is made even in the so-called 'traditional' methods, in the form of practice sessions. Being able to fit a jigsaw puzzle together is undoubtedly important. But, being able to recognize the shapes of the pieces and to be able to fit them the right way up is equally important. Though skills may be developed by practical application, the extent to which knowledge could be developed merely through practical problem solving activities is open to question.

Fischer questions the need for linguistic competence by casting doubts on the views of the proponents of the cognitive approach to language instruction.

> 'Proponents of the cognitive approach to language instruction state that CC presupposes acquisition of linguistic competence. Therefore, the students must achieve some degree of linguistic competence before he can engage in linguistic performance of a communicative nature' (1981:207).

Zelson who regards CC and linguistic competence as components of what he calls wider language 'proficiency' feels that linguistic competence and CC are two different things.

> 'Communicative competence and linguistic competence are not the same; in fact they show a strong relationship to each other only at the two opposite extremes of language proficiency' (1976:20).

Though Zelson does not advocate the teaching of one component as more important than the other, he feels that linguistic competence is a good point at which to begin. Zelson is not alone in thinking that teaching for CC should be preceded by teaching for linguistic competence. Westphal (1976:33) who considers CC as the ability to share feelings and experiences, also regards CC and linguistic competence as two different things. Johnson (1982) on the other hand considers linguistic competence as a very essential part in the case of first or second language teaching.

Horowitz (1983:13) supports the view held by Zelson, Lukman (op. cit.) and others that, linguistic competence is different from CC but related. She regards CC as being primarily to do with a performative capability.

Wong (1982:285) on the other hand equates CC with ability to convey referential meaning, in relation to Utilitarian English.

> 'The criterion should be *whether* a message has been communicated; not *how well* it has been communicated in terms of style'.

The view that CC means the ability to get referential meaning across is in direct contrast to Hymes' views. Discussing kinesic behaviour which often substitutes for syntactic features, Hymes states that

> 'the theory of competence cannot be limited to the referential meaning of language alone' (1967:27).

As Paulston points out, when it is said that 'getting your meaning across' is the goal of communication, it becomes necessary to ask 'what sort of meaning?' (1973:348).

CC as Hymes sees it carries the knowledge of the rules of grammar and the rules and conventions of use and also the ability to use these to convey both referential *and* social meaning. The restricted sense of CC as the ability to communicate referential meaning is something that has evolved out of the needs and problems of ESL/EFL classrooms. It is largely the failure to take into account the concepts of heterogeneity and differential competence in Hymes' theory of CC and a persistent belief that 'competence' is an idealized concept, that has led to the concept of a ESL/EFL learners' CC that differs from that of native users. The concept of a CC continuum does away with the need to consider SL/FL learners' competence as being on a different plane altogether. The notion that referential meaning can be conveyed without necessarily having linguistic competence is also a result of associating 'competence' with 'ideal knowledge'. To get any sort of meaning across some linguistic competence is essential -e.g basic question forms, request forms etc. which form grammatical competence at a very basic level. On the other hand, because the 'what' (message) is dependent on the 'how' (manner), some degree

of sociolinguistic competence is also essential for *effective* communication. Therefore, both the equation of CC with purely referential meaning and the notion that grammatical competence is not a necessary part of learners' CC as it is not necessary for conveying referential meaning are misleading if not incorrect.

This issue as to whether linguistic competence is part of CC or not is once again very important in relation to syllabus design, as it effects the type of language tasks and activities that are included in a syllabus and also the order in which they are presented.

3.3.2. ESL/EFL Teachers' Definition of Communicative Competence:

In her 1979 paper, Paulston points out the ways in which among language teachers in the USA EFL teachers have tended to identify themselves with the referential view and the ESL teachers with the socio-cultural view when defining CC. This is by no means a clear cut division, but some of the prominent contributors to research on CC in language teaching in the USA follow this pattern. Rivers and Savignon are two of the names associated with developing CC in EFL and Paulston and Bruder in ESL. This division is not prominent in the United Kingdom.

Paulston (1979) points out that,

> 'Rivers (1973) and those who work with foreign language teaching in the United States tend to define Communicative Competence simply as linguistic interaction in the target language: 'the ability to function in a truly communicative setting; that is in spontaneous transactions involving one or more persons' (Savignon 1978:12). People who work in ESL, on the other hand use Communicative Competence in Hymes' sense (1972) to include not only the linguistic forms of the language but also its social rules, the knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use these forms (Paulston 1974). In the latter view the objectives of language teaching are held to include socio-cultural rules for language use, not as an added cultural component but as an integral part of the language taught. The first view concentrates on teaching the referential meaning of the language through a formal approach' (Paulston 1979:1).

3.3.2.1. EFL Teachers' Interpretation of Communicative Competence:

Among the educationists who seem to advocate basic skills for communication in the target language in order to develop CC, and who do not particularly stress the importance of 'appropriacy' of socio-cultural rules are Savignon (1972:8, 1976:5, 1978:12), Rivers (1973:25-35), Fischer (1981:207), Littlewood (1974:38, 1981:6), Valdman (1978:568) and Allen (1975:1). Savignon certainly does not say that socio-cultural content is not important when it comes to native speaker competence, but she does seem to favour the idea that in order to promote the ability of the learners to communicate in the target language it is not essential to consider either grammaticality or appropriacy. In the 1976 paper, she says in relation to the CC of native speakers that,

> 'Communicative Competence is not a method. It is a way of describing what it is a native speaker knows which enables him to interact effectively with other native speakers. This kind of interaction is by definition spontaneous i.e. unrehearsed. It requires much more than a knowledge of the linguistic code. The native speaker knows not only *how* to say but *what* to say and *when* to say it. The linguistic features of an exchange are embedded in a cultural context, the roles of the other participants and a host of non-verbal communication cues such as distance, posture, gestures, facial expressions.'

In relation to grammatical competence she feels that, 'accuracy in the use of all these linguistic elements is not essential for CC' (1976:4).

Allen expresses a similar view when he says that,

> 'The major concern for the speaker is that the listener understands his message. This may entail the use of incorrect pronunciation, grammar and even vocabulary. It may also involve the use of gestures in place of verbal cues' Allen (1975:1).

Savignon's claim that 'we respond to *what* is said, not *how* it is said' (1973:7), is not supported by the findings of educationists and linguists, as empirical evidence show that the learners' understanding of *what* is said is largely dependent on *how* it is said, and the inability to differentiate messages on the basis of how it is said leads to all kinds of difficulties -e.g. Wolfson et al. (1983:116-128), Blum-Kulka (1983:36-55).

This restricted sense of the term CC in EFL is related to the restricted goals of FL teaching and the particular problems faced by FL teachers. In the case of British students learning French or German or Thai or Japanese students learning English the uses of the FL are restricted. These students are usually unlikely to use these languages in family or friendship domains, even though the Thais and the Japanese would use the FL more than the British students would. As a result, the 'use' dimension does not come into prominence in FL teaching. In the case of English speakers studying a FL, there is little motivation to use the FL as they are able to get by using their MT even in foreign countries. In both cases there are few opportunities for using the FL extensively. In such situations FL teachers find it extremely difficult to teach the use conventions of the FL. Therefore, they are forced to concentrate on teaching grammar or if adopting a communication approach the conveyance of referential meaning of a restricted kind. In such situations, it is not extraordinary that the teachers of FL feel that CC as far as their students are concerned is no more than the conveying of referential meaning.

3.3.2.2. ESL Teachers' Interpretation of Communicative Competence:

In direct opposition to the view of the EFL teachers is the view of those who feel that getting meaning across is not the only goal in learning a language but getting the right meaning across in the most appropriate manner; or those who advocate both grammaticality and appropriateness in relation to CC. Among these are Paulston (1978:378), Paulston and Bruder (1976:57), Rintell (1979:98), Hannerz (1973:238), Canale and Swain (1980:20), Zimin (1981:44) and Cohen and Olshtain (1981:113). In Britain, Munby (1978:26) and Johnson (1982:12, 21) who are in favour of a different approach (ESP/needs analysis) have based their approach on a Hymesian framework. Widdowson who initially advocated CC in relation to ESP (1977, 1979) has gone on to develop an expanded framework for ESP taking into account schema theory and discourse processes (1983). Sociolinguists and others involved in related fields continue to hold the view that CC should most certainly incorporate both linguistic competence and other rules of use -e.g Hymes (1973:66), Edelsky (1977:225) and Cazden (1973:19).

As in the case of EFL teachers, ESL teachers have taken this stand because of the exigencies of their teaching situation. In ESL situations unlike in EFL situations, the learners are called upon to use the SL in different domains.

Whether it is ESL in countries such as the USA or Australia where immigrant communities use the SL for day to day transactions or in countries such as India, Sri Lanka or Malaysia where the SL plays a major role in intranational affairs and/or performs the role of a *lingua franca* and is perhaps also used in family and friendship domains, the SL is used for interaction and communication. Therefore, in ESL situations the rules and conventions of use are more important than in EFL situations. In such situations the learners are called upon to use all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. All this involves social meaning in addition to referential meaning.

It is understandable that psychologists and language teachers, sociolinguists and anthropologists, and similarly ESL/EFL syllabus designers should arrive at different interpretations of a theory that encompasses as much as CC does. Though there are points of convergence it is still possible to see the different interests even among the theorists who share similar views on CC. For instance, to the psychologists Campbell and Wales what is of primary importance is the way in which competence theory would affect language acquisition theory and similarly for the ESL/EFL teachers the way it affects syllabus planning, teaching methodology and testing.

This is what makes McGroarty (1984:257) state that,

> 'Communicative Competence as a concept can mean different things for different groups of students; program planners, administrators and teachers will be able to provide better instruction only after considering the specific communication needs of specific learners in terms of the specific purposes for which the language is to be used.'

In each case, aspects of the theory that are most relevant to their particular interest are bound to acquire significance over the components which are not particularly relevant. Similarly, if some aspect that is of particular interest is not covered by the theory it is also natural to argue that, that particular aspect should be incorporated. Still, it is not possible to keep expanding a theory to accommodate all these different demands. Rather, it should be the prerogative of researchers working in these different areas to see how the theory could be best used for the development of their areas and also to contribute the findings in their particular areas to the development of a stronger unified

theory of CC. If the theory were to be changed continually to suit different disciplines it would indeed become little more than an 'umbrella concept'.

3.4. The Ideal Theory of Communicative Competence: Avenues for Further Research

It may be a long while yet before grammarians, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and educationists among others are all agreed as to what the ideal theory of CC is -if that will ever happen. What would the characteristics of such a theory be? The basic criterion as Hymes suggested when he introduced the theory of CC is that it should take competence as the most general term for the capabilities of a person. It should also be able to deal with all the different factors that effect language perception and production such as psychological constraints, socio-cultural factors, linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic features. It should be able to deal with differential competence among heterogeneous populations. It should also deal with discoursal features such as those explored by Schegloff (1972a, 1972b), Ervin-Tripp (1972) and Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan (1977). Above all it should not degenerate into the level of a list of specifications of what a competent speaker hearer is capable of but a description and an explanation of the core of what could be regarded as CC. In Spolsky's words, it should tell us 'what we know when we know a language' (1978:113) and explain the capabilities of a competent user.

The present writer agrees with Hymes that,

> 'The term *competence* ....should not be used as a synonym for ideal grammatical knowledge as by Chomsky, or extended to a speech community collectively as by De Camp, or extended to ideal communicative knowledge as by Habermas, or done away with as Labov would seem to prefer; rather *competence* should retain its normal sense of the actual ability of a person. Just such a term is needed to assess the process of work in actual speech communities, and their consequences for persons. *Competence* as a term for ideal knowledge may overcome inequality conceptually for linguists, but only as a term for the ability of persons, assessed in relation to contexts of use, can it help overcome inequality practically for the members of speech communities' (1973:66).

Since Hymes' theory of CC many other theories of CC have been proposed.

Subsequent developments have shown that many questions will have to be successfully answered and many problems sorted out before any CC theory becomes acceptable to the different groups. The intense interest that has been shown in developing the CC theory while leading to confusion in some ways have also brought about a deeper understanding of language knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge; particularly the socio-cultural aspects of language knowledge. The ideas, insights and propositions in succeeding investigations are interesting in their own right but also as charting the course of the development of the theory beginning with Hymes' insightful ideas. For present investigators who have nearly twenty years of research on CC theory to draw upon, Hymes' theory may seem incomplete, but it is nevertheless remarkable for the way it takes into account the different aspects that are considered crucial today.

3.4.1. The Theoretical Framework Proposed by Canale and Swain:

Among the theoretical frameworks for CC proposed in recent times, the one proposed by Canale and Swain (1980:1-47) and elaborated further by Canale (1984:2-28) is of great interest. Like many others they take Hymes' theory as their starting point. Though they differ from Hymes' views on certain points such as in their rejection of Hymes' view that ability to use should be considered a part of CC they are in agreement with Hymes on many other points.

One of their main contributions is their elaboration of the concept of the components of CC. According to their 1980 framework CC comprises three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. In addition another component -discourse competence- has since been proposed by Canale in the 1984 model. Grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence in Canale and Swain's framework are more or less similar to these aspects discussed in Hymes. Grammatical competence is considered as including 'knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology' (1980:29). They go on to state that, 'It is not clear that any particular theory of grammar can at present be selected over others to characterize this grammatical competence' (ibid.). According to this framework, sociolinguistic competence is made up of socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse. In the 1984 framework, the rules of discourse are considered as a separate component.

Sociolinguistic rules are considered as being crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between the literal meaning and the speaker's intention' (ibid:30). The introduction of strategic competence in the 1980 model and discourse competence in the 1984 model are two of the important features of Canale and Swain's framework that differentiate it from that of Hymes. Therefore, these components will be treated in some detail in the next subsections. In Hymes' theory the features of discourse which form a separate component of Canale's elaboration of their model (1984) are included in the sociolinguistic component.

3.4.1.1. Strategic Competence:

The strategic competence component in Canale and Swain's model result from the researchers' interest in SL learning. Whereas in making statements about grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence (and also discourse competence) they have native speakers of a language in mind, in making statements about strategic competence their focus shifts to 'learners'.

'Communication strategies' is a concept which was originally introduced in relation to language acquisition (Tarone et al. 1976:76-90). That learners resort to strategies in the absence of target language proficiency, and that this is necessary during the early stages of learning, is acceptable. But whether such strategies form such an important part in the language of competent users, as to warrant being included in a theory of CC is questionable. From the statements made by Canale and Swain and Canale, it is quite clear that, in relation to strategic competence they are thinking basically of learners. Canale describes strategic competence thus:

> '....this component is composed of mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action for two main reasons: (a) to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting conditions in actual communication (e.g. momentary inability to recall an idea or grammatical form) or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas of communicative competence; and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g deliberately slow or soft speech for rhetorical effect). For example, when one does not remember a given grammatical form, one compensatory strategy that can be used is paraphrase. Thus, if a *learner* did not know the English term 'train station', he or she might try a paraphrase such as 'the place where trains go' or 'the place for trains'. Of course, such strategies need not be limited to resolving grammatical problems: actual communication will

> require *learners* to handle problems of a sociolinguistic nature (e.g how to address strangers when unsure of their social status) and of a discourse nature (e.g how to achieve coherence in a text when unsure of cohesion devises)' (1983:10) (emphasis mine).

Though in this particular paper Canale is discussing CC in relation to SL pedagogy, it is still interesting to note, that he addresses the issue from the perspective of any speaker and not specifically that of a learner in discussing the other components of CC.

Though any speaker of a language is called upon to paraphrase, ask for help from the hearer etc. to get over a memory lapse, the present writer feels that this phenomenon is not important enough in itself to require a separate component in CC theory to explain it. In paraphrasing or using an alternative word, a speaker is drawing on his grammatical competence, and in using such strategies as speaking slowly for rhetorical effect, or 'no-naming' when addressing a stranger, s/he is drawing on his/her sociolinguistic competence. Slow speech for rhetorical effect will be effective only if slow speech is seen in this light, in that particular society; hence its relationship with sociolinguistic competence. Similarly no-naming in addressing a stranger would not work in a society where this device is not known, or is unacceptable. 'Strategies' such as 'no-naming', paraphrasing etc. in the use of a native speaker are a sign of what has been named 'fluency' or 'automaticity' (Bialystok and Sharwood Smith 1985:109) and is a feature of that aspect of his/her competence that has been variably termed 'ability to use' (Hymes 1966:16), 'pragmatic competence' (Chomsky 1980:59), 'capacity' (Widdowson 1983:11), 'processes' (Ellis 1985:48), 'control' (Bialystok and Sharwood Smith 1985:101) and 'ability to create meanings' (Candlin 1985). It is in effect the ability to put grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge into use in any interactive situation, to overcome a problem -e.g a memory lapse or having to address someone whose social position, marital status etc. are unknown or to suit a new situation -e.g having to explain what a 'tappit hen' is to someone who has never seen one. The means adapted by competent users for the smooth progression of discourse in the face of a memory lapse etc. are the use of alternatives to which competent speakers have ready access' and making use of these alternatives in the case of competent users is a sign of fluency and automaticity. In the case of learners, the use of communication strategies is a compensatory device, compensating both for the lack of knowledge and the deficiencies in the ability

to use. These two cannot be regarded as completely different processes. The difference lies in that one is a feature of CC and the other of IL.

Richards and Schmidt (1983:148) reiterate the fact that communication strategies as Canale and Swain mean it are a phenomenon that is connected with learners, when they state,

> 'The concept of repair in second language communication can be extended to include what Tarone (1977) and others have referred to as *communication strategies*. These are self initiated responses and requests for assistance which occur when the speaker is trying to express concepts for which target language vocabulary is lacking.'

The learner centred characteristic of strategic competence is further illustrated in Savignon's writings.

> 'Imagine for a moment a student of French who has been asked out to dinner in a Paris restaurant or, to use an example on this side of the Atlantic, has agreed to serve as an interpreter for a visitor from Rouen... His chance of being served what he wants, or of giving the right information to the visitor, are much greater if he has learned *strategies* to cope with the linguistic disadvantage at which he inevitably finds himself:
>
> What do I do if I don't understand?
> What if I can't think of a word?
> How can I overcome my embarrassment at not speaking?'
> (1975:2).

Bialystok (1985:257) points out that there is no clear cut division between learning strategies and communication strategies evident in learners IL thus providing further evidence that strategic competence in this restricted sense is clearly a feature of learner language.

3.4.1.2. Discourse Competence:

The problem with discourse competence too, is that it is not easy to separate the type of skills that this competence consists of, according to Canale (1983:9), from grammatical and sociolinguistic competence.

> 'This type of competence concerns mastery of how to

> combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. By genre is meant the type of text: for example, oral and written narrative, an argumentative essay, a scientific report, a business letter, and a set of instructions each represent a different genre.'

The way in which this component can be differentiated, is by thinking in terms of the extra skills needed to perform these language tasks. It is possible to assume that this component of CC would be characteristic of those members at the higher end of the CC continuum. It could also perhaps be linked with the higher levels of 'analysed knowledge' (Bialystok 1982:) and 'planned discourse' (Ellis 1985:49–50) discussed in relation to SLD, but which would also apply to the CC continuum. The type of knowledge and skills that form this component refer both to linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of Hymes' framework. It is obviously linked to grammatical competence as Canale and Swain themselves point out the need to use grammatical forms for achieving spoken or written text. On the other hand, the text 'genres' are related to rhetorical conventions and to conventions related with register. Therefore, these form a link with sociolinguistic competence and therefore with socio-cultural features that underlie sociolinguistic competence.

3.4.2. Bachman and Palmer's Model:

The theoretical framework of CC examined by Bachman and Palmer's test (1982:449–466) comprises three main components: grammatical competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence. The grammatical component according to this framework involves morphology and syntax. Bachman and Palmer exclude phonology and graphology from the grammatical component because 'there appears to be a critical level of pronunciation accuracy (or legibility), below which verbal communication breaks down, while above that level, communicative language use is possible, with increasing facility as accuracy increases' (ibid:450).

The ability to express and comprehend messages is labelled pragmatic competence by Bachman and Palmer. The sub-traits included in this component are vocabulary, cohesion, organization and coherence. They justify their inclusion of vocabulary as a sub-trait of pragmatic competence rather than grammatical competence on the basis that frequent observations show that 'certain non-native speakers with little or no grammatical competence are

nevertheless able to maintain some meaningful communication on the basis of their knowledge of vocabulary alone. At the other end of the continuum, among speakers whose grammatical competence is virtually complete, those who possess extensive vocabularies are able to express a greater variety of messages with greater precision and efficiency than are those with moderate vocabularies'. There is an overlap between pragmatic and sociolinguistic competencies in Bachman and Palmer's model as the items testing these aspects in their test of CC show (this point will be discussed further in chapter 6.3).

Sociolinguistic competence according to this framework includes the sub-traits: distinguishing of register, nativeness and control of non-literal, figurative language and relevant cultural allusions.

On examining this framework, it becomes evident that these three traits cover the areas covered by the two components in Hymes' theory and the three (or four) components in Canale and Swain's model. While the grammar component stands, the other two components can be collapsed into one component: sociolinguistic competence. Discourse conventions can be regarded as part of sociolinguistic competence as the 'rules' in discourse are largely dependent on societal consensus unlike the rules of grammar. Aspects such as cohesion and organization are linked with the ability to use grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge. The traits which Bachman and Palmer consider as forming the sociolinguistic component are similar to the traits which are posited as comprising this component based on Hymes' theory.

3.4.3. Widdowson's 'Competence' 'Capacity' Distinction:

The most recent contribution of importance to the CC theory is Widdowson's elaboration of it in relation to ESP (Widdowson 1983). Widdowson's main criticism of Hymes' theory is that it is analytic:

> '...in Hymes' model of communicative competence the analytic perspective [of Chomsky's concept of competence] is retained: it is not a model of member knowledge of language use, but one which provides the means for analyzing member behaviour from outside' (ibid:24)

Referring to Hymes' parameters he states that,

> 'It is clear that what Hymes has in mind here is a person's ability to make judgements about the extent to which linguistic expression conforms to pre-existing norms of language activity, whether this be cognitive or communicative. It is the capability for assessment that constitutes communicative competence' (ibid.).

'Capacity' as suggested by Widdowson is the

> '...ability to exploit the resources for making meaning which are available in language whether these have been codified or not' (1984:246)

and this 'capacity' is depicted as being distinctive from CC:

> 'Capacity.... is essentially ethnomethodological. ...it is the ability to use a knowledge of language as a resource for the creation of meaning and is concerned not with assessment but with interpretation' (ibid:25).

The important contribution made by Widdowson to the development of CC theory is bringing into focus that aspect of CC that has not ben given prominence by CC theorists in the past: the ability to use language knowledge for creating meaning in interaction. However, to suggest that Hymes' theory of CC is purely analytic; that Hymes deals only with judgements about pre-existing norms of language behaviour, and that the 'use' 'interpretation' dimension is entirely lacking in Hymes' theory is misleading.

Firstly, Hymes is critical of Chomsky's competence theory not merely because of its inadequacy in not accounting for other aspects of language knowledge apart from the knowledge of sentence structure (ibid:23). One of Hymes' main criticisms is the notion of an ideal speaker hearer and the disregard of *actual use* (performance) and the *actual users* of a language. Hymes states that,

> '..if one starts not from the nature of grammar, but from the *nature of speech*, one might see that what to grammar is imperfect, or simply unaccounted for, maybe the artful accomplishment of a social act... or the patterened, spontaneous evidence of problem-solving and conceptual thought' (1967:4).

Further, he goes on to say that,

> '...a major characteristic has been that it [competence theory] takes structure as primary end in itself, and tends to depreciate use' (ibid).

The dynamic nature of language is very much a pre-occupation of Hymes' theory of CC. It is certainly not tagged on as an afterthought as Widdowson seems to suggest (1983:25). Thus,

> 'the acquisition of competence for use, indeed can be stated in the same terms as acquisition of competence for grammar. Within the developmental matrix in which knowledge of the sentence of a language is acquired, children also acquire knowledge of a set of ways in which sentences are used. From a finite experience of speech acts and their interdependence with socio-cultural features, they develop a general theory of speaking appropriate in their community, which they employ like other forms of tacit cultural knowledge in conducting and interpreting social life' (1967:11).

Hymes' preoccupation with the importance of the sociolinguistic aspects of language use also indicates that he is not merely thinking in terms of existing norms of rule governed behaviour. Though it is possible to lay down rules of grammar with some degree of certainty, the same could not be said about rules of use as it is not possible to lay down the 'rules of use'. Though a grammarian has a say when it comes to rules of grammar, it is the user who has complete control over the rules of use. As a result, rules of use tend to undergo change faster than the rules of grammar. In considering the sociolinguistic rules of use, a theorist is forced to view these forms from the point of view of the user and not from the point of view of the analyst.

Secondly, apart from the statements made by Hymes in relation to the importance of the concept of actual use in CC theory and individual differences [which Hymes calls 'personal competence' after Sapir] the concept of heterogeneity and differential competence would have no place in a theory which is merely analytic and restricted to the consideration of conformity to existing norms. White Thunder and Red Cloud Woman are important not merely because they differ in the tacit knowledge of their MT, but because of the differences in their ability to use it. The disadvantaged children whose

plight Hymes considers in relation to the notions of idealization in competence theory, are also related to the ability to *use* language and what that entails.

Thirdly, the concept of 'ability to use' is a very important aspect of Hymes' theory as Hymes sets it out. Hymes states very clearly that both knowledge and ability to use together form CC.

> 'Competence is dependent upon both (tacit) *knowledge* and (ability for) *use*. *Knowledge* is distinct, then, both from competence (as its part) and from systemic possibility (to which its relation is an empirical matter)... Cazden (1967), by utilizing the systemic possibility separates it from the what a person can do. ..knowledge is also to be understood as subtending all four parameters of communication.. there is knowledge of each. *Ability for use* also relates to all four parameters. Certainly it may be the case that individuals differ with regard to ability to use knowledge of each: to interpret, differentiate etc.' (Hymes 1967:16) (His emphasis).

The concept of competence has been reduced by educationists to mean static conformity, but this is not meant by Hymes in his proposition. Though it has not been developed very far, Hymes does consider the importance of the ability to use knowledge, and makes it clear that competence as he sees it, is not just limited to language knowledge.

Widdowson develops the notion of the ability to use (capacity), but regards it as being separate from competence, which is restricted by him to language knowledge. Widdowson himself points out in relation to the notions of competence and capacity that these 'are not restricted to matters of language alone. They are concerned as principles which control all learning and all uses of learning and which underlie human conceptual and perceptual purposes in general' (1983:106). Considering 'competence' in relation to areas outside language demonstrates the impossibility of separating 'competence' from 'ability to use' or 'capacity' as Widdowson prefers to call it. Bialystok and Sharwood Smith (1985:105) use a library analogy to illustrate what they term 'knowledge' and 'control' (capacity). With reference to this analogy, it is possible to ask whether knowing where the library is, how the books are arranged, how the catalogue is to be consulted etc. makes someone a competent library user? Similarly, can someone who *knows* the different parts of a car, the highway code, the way in which a car engine functions etc. be regarded as a competent driver? If the answer is 'no', by the same process of

reasoning, it is possible to say that anyone who has linguistic and sociolinguistic *knowledge* but not the *ability to use it* (capacity, control, procedural ability or whatever) is not communicatively competent. Ability to use (capacity) then is not a separate entity but an essential part of competence. Competence which does not go together with ability to use would be a 'restricted competence' of the type related to ESP (Widdowson 1983:6), but could not be considered as being CC.

Widdowson's development of the concept of capacity (ability to use) is an important contribution because this aspect has been overlooked by theorists who have been preoccupied with the knowledge components of CC, and because of its importance to theories of SLD and to language pedagogy. It highlights the importance of concentrating not only on imparting knowledge (linguistic, sociolinguistic) but on developing the ability to use this knowledge, both in terms of content and methodology.

The fact that an important aspect such as the ability to use has been by and large overlooked in the development of CC theory, indicates the need for further rethinking and empirical work, before CC theory can be regarded as being in any way definitive.

3.4.4. Candlin's Alternative Model:

Following Widdowson's lead Candlin in his 1985 paper presents what he terms an alternative model of CC derived from a Hallidayan view of language, with its focus on interdependence of text, ideation and interpersonality. This model according to Candlin has three presupposed characteristics:

> '(1) it explicitly recognizes the interplay among the three 'worlds' lying behind, as it were, any instance of text.
>
> (2) it declares that the worlds of text and ideation, of sentences and sentence meaning, enjoy a determinism not appropriate to the negotiable world of interpersonality; that rules and principles are not identical;
>
> (3) it is aware that the interpretation of utterances in discourse involves the speaker's and hearer's psycho-sociolinguistic capacity to make meanings and thereby create conventions' (1985)

As Widdowson looks at CC from an ESP perspective, Candlin views CC from a

testing perspective, and has come up with a model of CC which would help to shed light on testing problems. One of the interesting aspects of Candlin's model of CC, is that he views CC as being both a matter of *knowlesge* and *ability*. He states that,

> 'The model, then, is intended to make explicit that communicative competence is a matter of both *knowledge* (the three worlds [textual, ideational, interpersonal]) and *ability*, our capacity to interpret these worlds and in so doing to argument our knowledge through expression. It adopts a negotiative rather than a conformative stance... In this alternative view, then, it is not only crucial to capture the system of semantics and syntax, the schemata and the frames of interpersonality, but also to incorporate the variability inherent in human performance and interpretive capacity' (ibid.).

While pointing out that organizational principles that govern discourse do not operate like the categorical rules of grammar, Candlin still goes on to to dismiss Hymes' theory of CC as being 'traditional' and 'descriptive'. What Candlin says of discourse is also true of sociolinguistic rules and conventions: 'description' of the type possible with regard to grammar without reference to the user is not possible with sociolinguistic 'rules'.

Candlin's model is interesting because of its relevance to language testing and he goes on to discuss at length the problems of testability of CC. He fails to indicate that recent ideas in the area of CC are further developments of ideas that have gone before. While citing statements made by Wittgenstein in 1933 to illustrate that modern concepts are mostly a rethinking and reworking of 'traditional' concepts, he fails to recognize that this is true of CC theory as well.

3.4.5. Areas that Need Further Investigation:

3.4.5.1. Differential Competence: the Communicative Competence Continuum:

There are some areas of interest that are mentioned in Hymes' theory, but not discussed at length, and of these one of the most important areas that needs to be investigated, is that of differential competence. The suggestion made by Hudson, about 'deficits' or gaps that cut across all strata of society, is particularly interesting from this perspective. In relation to differential

competence or gaps in communicative ability, it would perhaps be possible to recognize some sort of scale, by observing the actual performance of the members of any given speech community, ranging from a 'maximal' level to a 'minimal' level. Hymes' rejection of Chomsky's theory of competence on the basis of an ideal speaker hearer, tends to support the possibility of CC being a continuum with some native speakers who belong to the lower end or the 'White Thunder' category, and others who belong to the upper end or the 'Red Cloud Woman' category, but the majority clustering round the centre which would in effect be the 'medial' competence. The existence of these degrees is supported by subsequent researchers: Wieman and Backlund (1980:191), Savignon (1973:10), Edmondson (1981:274), Hudson (1980:227), Hoffman (1974:4) and Edelsky (1977:229).

Ervin-Tripp while lending support to the theory which takes into account degrees of CC, sees it somewhat differently. According to her 'competence' has two meanings.

> 'One concerns basic rules which everyone masters who is a member of a community: if you fail you are ignorant, an outsider, a social bore, or a bit strange. The other type of competence involves ranked skills, where the criterion of success can be formally defined but where success is beyond the capacity of some individuals... Labov (1966) has described the formal structure of the game of 'dozens' which anyone can play who is in the Harlem teenage male street gang community. But the boys can rank each other in skill, on competence in doing well just as we know good raconteurs and joke tellers' (1971:37-38).

The present writer is inclined to believe that, these two types of competence are two points in a continuum rather than two completely different types. Once again, this is where the 'gaps' that Hudson talks about come into focus and gives further support to the hypothesis that there are degrees of CC. Since it is rare to find an individual who could perform all communicative activities equally well -e.g tell jokes and stories, preach sermons, give formal lectures, write poetry, hold informal discussions, tell stories to children, talk with people who are hard of hearing, is good in sales talk, foreigner talk, teacher talk etc.- it would be correct to say that the majority possess the 'basic rules' that Ervin-Tripp describes, and are at different points in the continuum in relation to other sociolinguistic skills they possess. Most people it would be permissible to assume would not be lacking in these 'basic skills', or

possess all/most of the other diverse skills, but would be average. This average CC would be sufficient to be considered communicatively competent in that particular community.

This notion of a CC continuum would be particularly relevant in language teaching, as it may be possible to work towards an average competence in the case of ESL/EFL learners. The notion of a CC continuum also prevents the type of problems that arise in relation to notions such as 'semilingualism' or 'less than native like competence' ascribed to ESL/EFL learners, as discussed in Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986:26-38). If based on such a continuum and not on 'situations', 'needs' and 'notions', a language syllabus is likely to increase CC in the sense of linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge for interaction and communication in the fullest sense.

The socio-cultural aspect of CC, and specifically the aspect dealing with the relationship of cultural factors and rules of use, also need further investigation. This aspect will be examined in chapter 4 of this thesis. More research will also need to be done on the relationship between the ability to use and the actual use of language.

3.4.5.2. Other Questions that Need to be Answered:

A test that would indicate with a good deal of reliability that someone was in full possession of CC has not yet been developed, and one keeps coming back to basic questions such as who exactly is a native speaker of a language, and what exactly does he know about the language.

Scovel, referring to age limitation which can be applied to accent but not to syntax and vocabulary, because the former is a neuromuscular reality and the latter is not, calls it the 'Conrad Phenomenon' in honour of Joseph Conrad, the Polish-born novelist who became one of the greatest literary figures of the English language, despite being practically unintelligible in his spoken production (Scovel quoted in Patowski 1980:462). Could Conrad be called a native speaker of English? Possibly not. Was he communicatively competent? If we take the 'getting meaning across' view of CC, Conrad would not qualify, as he may not have been capable of inquiring the way to the railway station, and receiving the information he wanted because of unintelligible speech. But is it possible to say he could not get his meaning across? A comment made

by Hoffman in relation to levels of competence in oral communication seem to be of interest here. According to Hoffman,

> 'An individual's competence in the written form of a language has no necessary relationship with his competence in its spoken form, even though there may be some statistical correlation between these competencies for any given population. All natives can speak or understand (by definition), yet there are wide differences in their ability to read and to write. Thus competence in the written language is independent of competence in the oral language. This is true of both foreign and native speakers' (Hoffman 1974:4).

Is CC something that is limited to speech?

3.4.5.3. Communicative Competence as Specifically Speech Based:

In many discussions of CC, it is possible to see that the only aspect that is taken into account is speech. Communication is often referred to as synonymous with speech. This is particularly the case among researchers who argue that CC means 'getting meaning across' as they infer meaning to be conversational meaning –e.g Savignon. When Pawley and Syder state that,

> 'we may speak of a 'one clause at a time facility' as an essential constituent of communicative competence in English: the speaker must be able to regularly encode whole clauses, in their full lexical detail, in a single encoding operation and so avoid the need for mid clause hesitations' (1983:204).

they too seem to be thinking only in terms of speech.

Though there may be differences in an individual's competence in the spoken and written forms of the language, the present writer feels that this depends on the point of the continuum to which the person belongs, that it is, in other words dependent on his/her degree of CC. CC includes competence in both the spoken and the written forms of the language and includes all four skills, listening and speaking, reading and writing.

While some researchers and educationists regard CC as specifically speech based, there are others who stress both the written and spoken aspects (Canale and Swain 1980, Canale 1983:9, Saville Troike 1983:131).

With regard to the difference in an individual's CC in the spoken and the

written forms that Hoffman comments on (op. cit.), SLD research offers certain explanations that might be valuable to CC theory. In discussing the variable competence model of SLD proposed by him, Ellis (1985:47–59) refers to the work of Ochs (1979) on *planned discourse* and *unplanned discourse*. He also makes a distinction between *analyzed* and *unanalyzed* knowledge and between *primary* and *secondary processes* in the construction of discourse.

> 'There are two basic types... *primary* and *secondary processes*. Primary processes are responsible for engaging in unplanned discourse. They draw on knowledge that is relatively unanalysed, including non-systematic knowledge. Secondary processes are evident in planned discourse and draw on knowledge towards the analyzed end of the continuum. The terms 'primary' and 'secondary' have been chosen to reflect the primacy of unplanned discourse in communication. Everyone learns how to engage in spontaneous communication, but not everybody learns how to construct discourse that has been deliberately and carefully contrived according to some more or less conscious plan. The 'primary' processes are part of everyday language use, the 'secondary' processes are the product of developed cognitive abilities' (ibid:50).

The relationship between analyzed and unanalyzed knowledge, planned and unplanned discourse and the primary and secondary processes of discourse construction may explain the descrepancies between the spoken and the written CC of native speakers. It is quite usual to hear native speakers say that their grammar is 'very bad'. What is often meant by this statement is that they have to consciously think about grammaticality in constructing involved sentences in written discourse, and that if vigilance is relaxed, it is possible to fall into error. At the same time, listening to the spoken discourse of the same individual would reveal no traces of a conscious effort to be grammatical or signs of ungrammaticality. This is because the type of effort required in written discourse is not required in spoken discourse. written discourse could be regarded as being more likely to be 'planned', 'analyzed' and involving 'secondary processes' of discourse construction, to use Ellis' terminology. Therefore, someone who has a high degree of competence in spoken discourse which is more likely to be 'unplanned', 'unanalyzed' and involving 'primary processes' of discourse construction, would not necessarily be at a high point in the CC continuum when it comes to CC in the written form.

To get back to Conrad, it would be possible to argue from a SLD point of

view, that he had difficulty in getting his meaning across in speech because he had mastered analyzed knowledge and the secondary processes of discourse construction but not unanalyzed knowledge and primary processes. On the other hand, it could also be explained as a 'gap' or 'deficit' in performative ability that may be shared by a native speaker too.

3.4.5.4. Communicative Competence as an Ideal Speech Situation:

If Conrad did not possess CC, neither do most native speakers according to Holec (1980:30) and others who consider CC as an ideal condition. Habermas quite definitely states,that CC is an ideal speech situation.

> 'I propose to use this term in a similar way as Chomsky does with linguistic competence. Communicative Competence should be related to a system of rules generating an ideal speech situation, not regarding linguistic codes that link language and universal pragmatics with actual role systems. Dell Hymes among others, makes use of the term CC in a sociolinguistically limited sense. I don't want to follow this convention' (1970:147).

Considering the many controversies surrounding CC theory, the need for further research and rethinking is clearly indicated. A vast amount of empirical work may need to be done before these many questions can be satisfactorily resolved. Initially, the differences in the approach of the cognitive and behavioural theorists will need to be resolved. As Wieman and Backlund suggest,

> 'One necessary component of a theory of CC -if it is to be theoretically and pragmatically meaningful- is the inclusion of both cognitive and behavioural processes as interdependent aspects of CC' (1980:189).

3.5. Communicative Competence and Communicative Syllabus Design

3.5.1. The Impact of Communicative Competence on Syllabus Design:

The impact of CC theory has largely been responsible for the moving away from structural syllabuses and the movement towards new varieties such as situational, functional, notional syllabuses etc. Though all these different types of syllabuses claim to be 'communicative', it is possible to see quite a gap between the theory of CC on the one hand and these so-called communicative

syllabuses on the other. This is basically because each communicative syllabus designer seems to take a different set of criteria as his/her guidelines.

Also, syllabus designers who start off by discussing the concept of CC and what it entails in designing a syllabus, end up specifying models for syllabus design or designing syllabuses which do not really seem to apply the theory of CC as such –e.g Munby's model of communicative syllabus design.

3.5.1.1. Munby's Model of Communicative Syllabus Design:

Munby accepts Hymes' concept of CC and in fact puts forward strong arguments as to why it is preferable to other theories of competence (Munby 1978:6–27), such as those suggested by Chomsky, Habermas and Halliday. He stresses the importance of the socio–cultural aspect of CC as Hymes sees it (1978:21).

One of the most important features of CC theory as formulated by Hymes, is that it presents the communicatively competent speaker/hearer as a linguistically flexible being. He knows what to say, when to say it, and to whom to say it to. In other words, s/he is adaptable, and adapts herself/himself to the type of perception and production, the interpretation and assessment that is required by any interaction. Thus, speaker hearer A, who is a waitress, would be able to interact not only with speaker B and C who are another waitress and customer respectively, but also with X and Y who happen to be the dentist and the garbage collector respectively. It is also possible to conceive of a situation where these five hypothetical speaker/hearers belong to different strata of society and different educational backgrounds etc. Even though their *communicative performance* may be different, they will still be able to interact without difficulty of understanding each other. In other words, CC entails a great degree of flexibility and adaptability to each novel situation. A communicatively competent speaker/hearer would thus be able to cope not only with the predictable but also with the unpredictable situations.

After discussing the merits of Hymes' theory of CC, Munby goes on to design his model for communicative syllabus design doing away with just this element of flexibility. He goes by the needs of the learners which he feels it is possible to specify exactly, thus not taking into account the element of unpredictability that is present in any interaction.

3.5.1.2. Wilkins' Notional Syllabus:

Wilkins, who advocates a syllabus based on semantic notions, points out the difficulties in trying to specify learners needs as such, but curiously enough feels that these problems do not apply to the second language situation.

> 'The characteristic of most language teaching situations, especially the teaching of language as part of the regular curriculum in full time education is that the needs of the learner are unpredictable in principle and varied and conflicting in practice. (The only possible exception being situations where the language is being learned as a second rather than a foreign language, i.e. for use either as a medium for learning of other subjects or for communication of various other kinds outside the school environment)' (Wilkins 1981:96).

Wilkins also points out that objection is being made here not to considering the learners needs as such, but to 'the spurious precision of this particular process' (1981:87). Most advocates of a needs analysis approach take this precision for granted.

The present writer wishes to argue that the second language situation is no different in that the learners' needs cannot be defined precisely by any means, except by limiting one's self very narrowly to the immediate present and perhaps to short term considerations. Even this however, is a rather doubtful proceeding. Those who are strongly in favour of a needs analysis approach tend to support the CNP model proposed by Munby and tend to feel that ESP (or EOP or EAP as the case may be) is a solution to the problems of SL situations. More recently, the Munby device and the notional functional approach have been criticized as being limited to the description of 'parts', and of not providing the 'means of characterizing how these parts are activated and related in the actual discourse process' (Widdowson 1983:87) and that methodology has been neglected by the emphasis being 'on *what* ought to be taught; on content, rather than on *how* it should be taught' (ibid.).

3.5.2. The Need for a Socio-cultural Component:

Some proponents of a communication based approach, as opposed to a structure based approach stress the need to include a socio-cultural component in the syllabus. This too can be attributed to the impact of CC

theory on language pedagogy. Breen and Candlin state that,

> 'the social conventions governing language form and behaviour within the group are, therefore central to the process of language learning. In any communicative event, individual participants bring with them prior knowledge of meaning and prior knowledge of how such meaning can be realized through the conventions of language form and behaviour'

and further that,

> 'learning to communicate is a socialization process' (1980:90–91).

As Johnson points out, those who object to a communicative approach find this very issue one of the reasons for their objection, on the grounds that 'it is impossible (rather than unnecessary) to teach the rules of use. One argument is that these rules are so complex that any attempt to teach them is bound to end in failure' (Johnson 1982:27). There are problems in trying to teach the rules of use in these ESL/EFL situations. Firstly, the learners are already in possession of sociolinguistic conventions of one culture, which, quite contrary to the ethnocentric beliefs of linguists who like to think that other languages necessarily carry the same features of language they have based their theories on (e.g the Gricean maxims of cooperativeness), can be very different. The cultural assumptions that govern the rules of use and the way these are used can also be quite different. In such situations, some knowledge about the sociolinguistic rules of use need to be imparted to the learners through cultural explanations, and the ability to use these conventions need to be cultivated by showing them how to use this knowledge by providing opportunities for actual use. The culture materials in a CC approach provides the awareness that is necessary to understand the way sociolinguistic rules of use work (the knowledge), and communicative activities in the classroom where opportunities for using this knowledge are provided, demonstrate how this knowledge is used and thus improves the learners' ability to use this knowledge.

However, many communicative syllabus designers concentrate on referential meaning and tend to regard appropriateness conditions governing the when, where, with whom and in what manner aspects of language use as being irrelevant for achieving this referential function. Even in notional/functional

type courses which claim to teach situation specific English, sociolinguistic teaching is restricted to routines and formulae which are supposed to meet the stipulated situational needs. In such cases, the question of cultural awareness that underlies the use of sociolinguistic conventions is not taken into consideration. Though it is CC rather than grammatical competence that sparked off research on communicative language teaching, and led to the development of models for communicative syllabuses, the goal of most of these syllabuses is something different from CC if considered in the light of Hymes' definition. Even though the need to take socio-cultural factors into consideration in the designing of syllabuses is stressed by some, in general the emphasis is on teaching learners to use the language rather than on teaching them to use the language *appropriately*. Conversely, the emphasis is on the use of appropriate language in narrowly defined and very restricted ways. In the latter type of approach, the learner is in constant danger of meeting with people who do not know, or do not wish to speak their half of the dialogue, or persist in behaving in a very uncharacteristic and unexpected manner. This brings us back to Paulston's statement regarding the different ways in which the sociolinguist and the language teacher regard CC, discussed earlier.

3.5.3. The Reluctance to Attempt Teaching the Rules of Use:

The reluctance to attempt teaching appropriate language use is due to various reasons:

Firstly, there is the fear of trying to impose an alien identity on the learner. This leads Wilkins to say that,

> 'to set as goals the norms of English or American behaviour, is to demand of learners that they behave like Englishmen or Americans' (Wilkins 1981:97).

Secondly, there is also the belief that it cannot be done (Williams 1979:18-21). Thirdly, there is a belief that learners do not want to learn the sociolinguistic rules of use (Johnson 1982:30). However, unlike many others, Johnson feels that, it is

> 'our duty to tell him (the student) what impression he will convey by using such and such a form, but it is for him to decide which impression in a given situation he wishes to convey. The teacher tells him *how* to be rude or polite, the

student decides *whether* to be rude or polite' (ibid.).

The fourth reason for not trying to teach appropriacy in language use is the fear of anomie (Prator 1969:103). Many teachers in EFL/ESL situations fear that learners would lose their cultural identity, if exposed to the values and outlook of an alien culture. This fear would be completely groundless if the rules in question are introduced in the right way, in that learners are made aware that it is merely a *different* system, rather than a system *superior* to their own. In fact impressing this fact on the learners would not only prevent any danger of anomie, but also motivate learning.

The general popularity of ESP over other approaches is partly due to this fear of imposing a different culture and the fear of undesirable acculturation, for it is generally believed that English for academic or occupational purposes are

> 'varieties of English which have evolved to serve the needs of groups whose members share specialist domains of language knowledge and experience, which are to a considerable extent disassociated from values of primary culture expressed through the mother tongue' (Widdowson 1982:12).

Whether used for SP, OP or AP, to disguise the cultural features underlying a language would be quite a task. However, the sensitivity of the issue of introducing appropriacy rules with a strong cultural bias, and when it has to be done the need to find euphemisms to do away with the suspicion and prejudice, is understandable.

3.5.4. Authenticity in the Classroom:

Another important issue in relation to communicative syllabus design is the controversy regarding the use of natural communicative activities as opposed to 'artificial' or simulated situations in the classroom. Once again, this situation is a result of the interest in the 'rules of use', and therefore, indirectly a result of the impact of CC theory on syllabus design. While one group feel that communicative activities should be a true reflection of real life situations, others feel that such activities could not possibly occur in a teaching situation, as the very fact that they are used for teaching make these activities unnatural. A third group are of the opinion that any simulated activity used in the

classroom or even things like pattern drills are natural in that situation, and that even drills can be made communicative -e.g Wilkins (1981:16-18). Butzkamm and Dodson feel that,

> 'No matter what interaction process takes place in the classroom, such interaction is communication of one kind or another. Even a drill exercise where the pupil responds to a stimulus within a tightly controlled framework, represents some form of communication' (Butzkamm and Dodson 1980:290).

They term this form of communication 'medium oriented communication' and the more natural forms of communication as 'message oriented'. Widdowson on the other hand, feels that many of the language teaching devices used in the classroom are unnatural (Widdowson 1978), and that 'authentic' materials can be 'inauthentic' to the learners under certain circumstances because,

> 'Authenticity... depends on a congruence of the language producers intentions and the language receiver's interpretation, this congruence being affected through a shared knowledge of conventions. It is clear that if this view is accepted it makes no sense simply to expose learners to genuine language use unless they know the conventions which would enable them to realize it as authentic' (1979:166).

Breen (1985:60-70) feels that authenticity in the classroom is a fallacy, and similarly the insistence on 'authentic materials' is also a myth, because,

> 'a learner will redefine any text against his own priorities, precisely because he is a learner' (ibid:62).

Further, he feels that,

> 'given the actual social potential of a classroom, the contrivance of 'other worlds' within it may not only be 'inauthentic' but also quite unnecessary' (ibid:67).

Though he certainly has a point when he says that learners do not respond to a given text in the same way as a fluent reader, neither do learners respond to everything in the same way just because they are learners. Learners are just as quick as fluent readers in expressing their boredom, when texts are

unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, authentic texts have a ring of truth about them which is totally lacking in texts concocted especially for the classroom. Breen's own examples, given in his paper amply illustrate this point. The difference in response when we know something to be a mere formula or going through the motions as opposed to a sincere statement/true concern is somewhat similar to the learners' response to concocted as opposed to authentic material. In the writer's experience learners –especially adult learners of a fairly advanced level– are quick to grasp the difference.

3.6. Communicative Competence in Relation to ESL Situations Such as that Found in Sri Lanka

Contrary to the belief that CC as spelt out by sociolinguists is not attainable by the second language learner, there are many facts which support the opposite view. If the misconception that CC is a highly abstract theory of perfection is done away with, it would not be difficult to see CC as something within reach of the average speaker hearer, and therefore within reach of the average learner, if s/he has the right motivation and is given the right guidance. It would also become clear that it is a very desirable goal to have in view in second or foreign language teaching. If empirical evidence were to reveal that there are indeed degrees of CC as factors such as differential competence among native speakers and also language deficits or gaps seem to imply, the view that learning for CC in the Hymesian sense of both knowledge and ability to use is both possible and desirable in ESL/EFL would be further facilitated.

Having taken the stand that teaching for CC is both possible and desirable, it is necessary to investigate how this would apply to a typical second language teaching situation such as that found in Sri Lanka (described in chapter 2). The ESL situation in Sri Lanka is typical in many ways; firstly, Sri Lanka being a country where English has become a second language due to being a colony of the British Empire. The countries which have an ESL situation because of this reason are by far in the majority, the other reason for an ESL situation being due to immigration –e.g USA and Australia. Sri Lanka is also typical in that most of the ESL learners are highly educated in their MT. Thirdly, like the majority of the ESL countries, Sri Lanka cannot afford to spend

vast sums of money on improving the ESL curriculum.

However difficult the task, the present writer feels that it is essential to give every learner the opportunity to become a competent user of the SL, so that s/he will profit from his/her competence in academic and other areas and also so that s/he will be able to see both his/her MT and her/his SL from a right perspective. In addition, it is the only way in which the feelings of elitism attached to English in Sri Lanka could be done away with. In the long run, it will also help national languages to flourish and people to regard them as something to be proud of and to preserve in their pure form without transforming them into varieties such as 'Singlish'.

3.6.1. The Need to Make Communicative Competence the Goal in ESL:

The need for teaching with the aim of improving the learners' CC especially at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, is best revealed in the learners' demand for speech in their ESL classes. Their constant complaint that they are not taught to speak, is in essence a plea for communicative skills, as what they are asking for is the ability to use the language for interaction and communication. All that most of these learners have received in their English classes at school is formal training in grammar. As Schmidt points out, their is ample evidence in

> 'research findings that grammatical competence derived through formal training is not a good predictor of communicative skills..' (1983:172).

If this were the case, it is essential to bring about a change in teaching goals and teaching methods in order to improve ESL at the tertiary level. In making CC the goal, attention should be focussed on improving linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and the skills necessary to use this knowledge in actual communication, in reading and writing, speaking and listening; through methodology that provides both the knowledge and the opportunities for increasing the ability to use, through use.

3.6.2. Means by which Communicative Competence in ESL Can be Achieved:

The solutions that are suggested here are, that,

1. English language teaching should make CC, the ability to use language in an acceptable, appropriate and feasible

manner its goal.

2. Because sociolinguistic competence is essential for CC, and because cultural awareness underlies sociolinguistic competence, culture based material which introduce sociolinguistic conventions, which would enable learners to master these conventions should be incorporated. This material should be geared towards making the learners aware of the socio-cultural features that underlie and condition any language and its use, and providing opportunities for using the rules and conventions of use.

3. The equality of languages and the fact that bilingualism need not necessarily mean biculturalism or anomie should be made clear through the teaching programme.

4. Subject specific materials should be included only as an extra component to the core language programme.

5. Language activities should form an intrinsic part in the English teaching programme. It should not be limited to any one area such as grammar or reading comprehension.

6. The need to use the language as much as possible both in and outside the classroom in order to increase their ability to use their linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge should be impressed upon the learners and opportunities should be provided for them to do so.

In order to put this type of teaching program into effect, it would be necessary to concentrate on a core language program. By a core language program the present writer does not mean 'basic skills' or merely 'communicative skills' in the sense of the ability to get meaning across, as suggested by Rivers or Savignon. For as Di Pietro points out,

> 'If the conveying of information were the sole reason for human speech, we would certainly have evolved neater, more precise codes than the logically messy languages we have. To relate a message with clarity and directness we do not need all the paraphrases that we must master in order to speak a new language. In fact computer languages are much better at processing semantic content than any natural language in the world' (Di Pietro 1976, quoted in Trachtenberg 1979:89).

What is meant by 'core language', is a central point from which it is possible to begin expanding outwards. Each new bit of information is linked to other things that went before and leaves the avenues open to be linked with other

things that learners will come across both in the classroom and outside.

It is also not suggested that at the end of such a programme all the learners concerned would end up with an optimum level of CC. Even if they reach only a minimal level of CC, they would be *on the way* to a higher level, and what is more important, they will be in a position to do more for themselves, to build upon what they do possess of the language.

Since teaching grammatical competence is at present the prominent goal in ESL in Sri Lanka and grammar teaching seems to be successful as far as the knowledge of the SL grammar goes[2], in order to make CC the goal in ESL, what seems to be necessary is to incorporate the sociolinguistic aspect of CC. Teaching sociolinguistic rules is not so simple or straightforward as teaching grammatical material, because sociolinguistic competence is still being researched and is not established like grammatical categories. But as Judd points out,

> 'we must endeavour to incorporate valid sociolinguistic data into second language text books while also realizing that we still have far to go in our efforts to understand what constitutes CC and how to teach it to others' (1983:135).

Notes

1. 'On Communicative Competence' –the title of Hymes' paper presented at the Research Planning Conference on Language Development Among Disadvantaged Children, held at the Ferkauf Graduate School at Yeshiva University (June 7–8, 1966) and later published in a condensed form in Pride and Holmes (1972).

2. The more advanced ESL learners at the tertiary level seem to have a substantial knowledge of the SL grammar in that they are able to make grammatical judgements in MCQ type tests. However, their use of this knowledge in planned written discourse casts doubts as to whether they are really able to use this knowledge satisfactorily. This point is discussed in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

4.1. Introduction

What is attempted in this chapter is to discuss the main issue addressed in this thesis: that focussing attention on language in a cultural context in ESL teaching would facilitate the development of CC (Communicative Competence) in ESL learners. It is suggested that neglecting to consider the importance of sociolinguistic competence as part of CC is a possible reason for the lack of CC among ESL learners in Sri Lanka and possibly in other similar ESL situations. In section 4.2, probable explanations for the lack of CC offered by Second Language Development (SLD) research are examined and the hypotheses investigated in this thesis are placed in context. In section 4.3, the relationship between culture and sociolinguistic competence and in turn between culture and CC is considered. This relationship is discussed by placing it in the wider context of the relationship between language and culture in general, and the problems in defining culture in this context are considered. Next in 4.4, the problems encountered in trying to teach language in a cultural context are discussed and the place of activities geared towards increasing cultural awareness (CA) and providing opportunities for improving the ability to use the knowledge of sociolinguistic rules and conventions in the teaching syllabus is outlined. The type of culture materials that could be incorporated into the teaching materials are discussed in section 4.5. In the final section, useful techniques for introducing this culture material and at the same time providing opportunities to practice and thereby improve the ability to use the sociolinguistic conventions of use which these culture materials are meant to introduce and explain, are outlined.

4.2. Why Do Learners Lack CC: Possible Explanations Provided by SLD Theory:

As outlined in chapter 1, various explanations based on SLD theory could be provided as to why ESL learners in situations such as Sri Lanka are lacking in CC; why they are unable to use English appropriately for interaction and communication after several years of formal English teaching both at school and at the university, and in many cases after having passed formal proficiency examinations. Although there are certain similarities between these points of view, there are also important differences. However, basically SLD views fall

into two distinct camps: those that support Krashen's Monitor Model and the Non-interface Hypothesis (Krashen 1981a and elsewhere) and those who do not support his theory (e.g Ellis 1984, 1985). The second group support a procedural ability/discourse knowledge explanation of SLD. In the following section, the explanations provided by these different schools of thought will be considered.

4.2.1. Krashen's Monitor Model and the Non-interface Hypothesis:

Krashen's Monitor Theory posits a dual competence model and makes a distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning'. According to Krashen,

> 'The fundamental claim of Monitor Theory is that conscious learning is available to the performer only as a *Monitor.* In general utterances are initiated by the acquired system -our fluency in production is based on what we have 'picked up' through active communication. Our 'formal' knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning, may be used to alter the output of the acquired system' (1981a:2)

Acquisition can take place inside a classroom as well as outside and depends on 'intake' (1981a:9, 119-137). In 'acquisition poor environments' such as the ESL situation in Sri Lanka, acquisition has to take place in formal learning environments -i.e the classroom. However, for acquisition to take place in such formal environments, the necessary ingredient is 'comprehensible input' in the form of real communication. Formal learning that takes place in such environments only leads to the development of the monitor and cannot aid ESL performance if acquisition has not taken place. The monitor is used by the learners to 'edit' their performance. Monitor users are of three types: those that are optimal users, those that are over-users and those that are under-users. Over-users run into difficulties by trying to use the monitor in spontaneous communication and under-users by not making use of the monitor at all. An optimal user does not use the monitor in informal situations (e.g speech) but uses it in formal situations (e.g writing). L2 performance in communication has to be initiated by acquired knowledge. Not only are acquired and learnt knowledge distinct and unrelated sources, but there is also *no transfer of knowledge from one to the other.* This is referred to as the *Non-interface Hypothesis* (Krashen 1981b cited in Ellis 1984:51).

Krashen's Monitor Theory, the input hypothesis and the non-interface

hypothesis rely heavily on grammatical morpheme studies: Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974, Dulay and Burt 1973, 1974, Larsen-Freeman 1975 among others (Krashen 1981a:57). Dulay and Burt have contributed to the development of the Monitor Theory by their elaboration of the creative construction hypothesis and the affective filter theory (Dulay and Burt 1974:253-274, 1978:65-89 and elsewhere). Creative construction in language acquisition is described by Dulay and Burt as referring to,

> 'the process by which learners gradually reconstruct rules for speech they hear, guided by innate mechanisms which cause them to formulate certain types of hypothesis about the language system being acquired, until the mismatch between what they are exposed to and what they produce is resolved' (1978:67).

The socioaffective filter on the other hand refers to,

> 'conscious or unconscious motives or needs, attitudes or emotional states of the learner... these filter the input and affect the rate and the quality of the language acquisition' (ibid:68).

From the perspective of Monitor Theory, the non-interface hypothesis offers two possible explanations for the communication problems encountered by ESL learners in Sri Lanka.

1. They are lacking in the 'acquired' knowledge necessary for L2 performance -i.e the formal classroom environment has not provided the comprehensible input necessary for acquisition.

2. Too great an emphasis on rules have made them monitor 'over-users', thus, rendering the effective use of the acquired knowledge in communication impossible.

Of these two possible explanations, the former seems more plausible. It could be argued that the type of grammar based formal instruction provided in the average classroom in Sri Lanka until quite recent times would lead to to the development of the monitor, but would not provide the type of comprehensible input necessary for acquisition. Since according to Krashen, learning does not turn into acquisition (Krashen 1982:83), and acquired knowledge is essential for normal communication, inability to communicate can be directly attributed to non-acquisition. The possible solution to the Sri Lankan ESL learners problem

from the point of view of Monitor Theory would be the provision of an acquisition facilitating environment in the classroom. According to Monitor Theory this is brought about by providing comprehensible input through spontaneous use situations.

Though it is possible to attribute the communication problem of Sri Lankan learners to non-acquisition due to lack of comprehensible input, this explanation is not problem free. Though it is true that in the case of the majority of learners there is no comprehensible input outside the classroom, and the structure based syllabuses can be regarded as limiting the scope of comprehensible input and therefore acquisition in the classroom, it would still be unrealistic to state that in the case of these learners no acquisition at all has taken place in the classroom. This is because of the large numbers of learners, large number of classes and the diversity of the teachers involved. It is not possible to rule out the possibility of some acquisition taking place in some of these classrooms, with some of these learners and teachers in spite of the structure-based syllabuses and in fact without any intention on the part of the teachers to provide comprehensible input. To conclude that this multitude of learners have been receiving exposure in the form of English instruction for years at school and at university without any acquisition taking place would be unrealistic.

The other problem is that in taking up such a position, the possibility of there being an interface between learning and acquisition has to be completely ruled out. It would not allow for the possibility of any 'seepage' from the learnt to the acquired knowledge taking place (Stevick 1980, cited in Ellis 1984:153). An interface position in relation to learning and acquisition such as that adopted by Sharwood Smith (1981: 159-169), and Bialystock and Frohlich (1977:2-26) would invalidate the non-acquisition hypothesis in relation to the communication problems of ESL learners in Sri Lanka. An interface position takes account of the possibility of learning facilitating acquisition.

From a single dichotomy of knowledge such as the implicit/explicit dichotomy proposed by Sharwood Smith, SLD theorists who support an interface position have gone on to considering a complex continua of knowledge (Bialystock 1982:181-206). A further development has been the Variable Competence Model (Ellis 1984:159-187, 1985:47-59) which queries the dual competence posited by the Monitor Model and explains learner

performance with reference to a single knowledge store. The connecting link between these second group of theories is the concept of learner variability and the importance of cognitive processes and discourse construction, which according to these theorists are not satisfactorily explained by the Monitor Theory. These views and the explanations they provide about the type of communication problem met with in Sri Lanka will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2. The Variable Competence Model and Other Related Theories:

The Variable Competence Model of Second Language Development (SLD) proposed by Ellis (op. cit.) is a model which proposes that,

> 'the learners' competence is a variable one and that this can be best be understood by hypothesizing a single knowledge store which is drawn on differently by the learner depending on the type of language use he is participating in. The learner employs different strategies according to the type of discourse he is helping to construct. Thus, the variability of language-learner language is to be explained in terms of the different strategies which are related to different types of language knowledge' (1984:167).

Ellis goes on to state that it is,

> '...useful to make a basic distinction between the *product* and the *processes* of acquisition. The product refers to what the learner does with the language -the discourse which he helps to construct. The process refers to both how the learner internalises second language (L2) knowledge and how he uses this knowledge in performance -the strategies of learning and use which comprise the 'black box'. The product then is the observable result of the processes' (1985:47).

In Ellis' model, the variability of a learner's L2 knowledge is outlined as being of two types: *non-systematic variability* and *systematic variability*. Non-systematic variability is described as the occurrence of linguistic alterants in free variation and systematic variability as the occurrence of variants in a regular and predictable pattern. Ellis suggests four types of L2 knowledge: automatic analysed, automatic unanalysed, non-automatic analysed and non-automatic unanalysed (1985:50), based on Bialystock's model (1982:183).

These various types of knowledge and the corresponding procedures for

constructing discourse are described in terms of the discourse continuum proposed by Ochs (1979:51–78), with planned discourse forming one end of the continuum and unplanned discourse the other end. Ellis outlines two basic types of procedures for constructing discourse: *primary processes* and *secondary processes* and points out that,

> 'Primary processes are responsible for engaging in unplanned discourse. They draw on knowledge that is relatively unanalysed, including non-systematic knowledge. Secondary processes are evident in planned discourse and draw on knowledge towards the analysed end of the continuum' (1985:50).

Each set of processes is said to have an external and internal representation, referred to as discourse and cognitive processes by Ellis. He suggests that *functional simplification, semantic simplification* (Ellis 1982), *pattern use* (Lyons 1968), and *vertical extension* (Wagner-Gough 1975, Hatch 1978) are primary processes, while *monitoring* (Krashen 1981a) and *borrowing* (Corder 1981) are secondary processes.

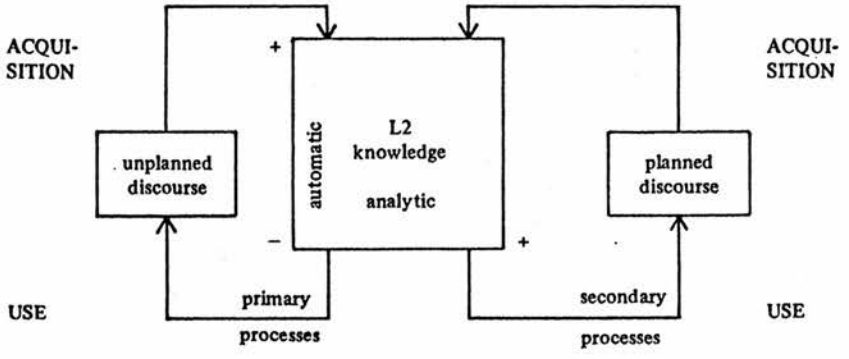
Another important feature of Ellis' model is the use=acquisition equation. This follows Widdowson's argument that new linguistic rules are the result of using language in communication (Widdowson 1979, 1983). Ellis states that,

> 'The relationship between language use and language acquisition is evident in a number of respects. Firstly, language use can be seen as the matrix in which linguistic knowledge is created. Thus the procedures that the learner employs in using L2 knowledge is internalised. Second, non-systematic knowledge functions as an important mechanism of development as it represents an unstable condition of interlanguage. Thirdly, the horizontal variability of L2 knowledge reflects the creation of the interlanguage continuum and also provides an extra source of knowledge' (1983:52).

Ellis' Variable Competence Model is schematically presented in Table 4.1 below. Ellis demonstrates the explanatory power of the Variable Competence Model by reconsidering some central issues of SLD research such as the natural order of development, differences according to age, fossilization, the role of the first language and the effects of instruction in the light of the model.

Table 4.1 Ellis' Variable Competence Model

Figure 2: Variable Competence Model of SLA



(Reproduced from Ellis 1985:54)

Ellis' model tries to illustrate the importance of discourse construction in SLD and he arrives at the conclusion that SLD is in fact the result of learning how to construct discourse of varying degrees of organization' (1985:58). The variability in the language of second language performance and the processes of discourse construction form a link between Ellis' model and those proposed by Bialystock (1982:181–206), Bialystock and Sharwood Smith (1985:102–117) and Tarone (1982:69–82, 1983:142–163). In his model Ellis incorporates the two dimensions; the automatic and the analysed factors proposed by Bialystok (1982:183). Bialystok and Sharwood Smith develop the system knowledge/processes dichotomy in their theoretical framework of interlanguage theory. They state that,

> 'explanations of learner performance should be related to two separate components, namely, the way in which the language system is represented in the mind of the learner (the categories and relationships in long term memory), and the processing system for controlling that knowledge during actual performance' (1985:104).

Tarone's Capability Paradigm addresses the problem of learner performance variability in terms of variation along a style continuum ranging from the superordinate to the vernacular (1983:73). She also takes into account the insights provided by human information processing research such as the controlled automatic distinction proposed by Shiffrin (1977) and Shiffrin and Schneider (1977) (ibid:81).

Ellis' model could be regarded as being related to the 'competence' 'capacity' distinction proposed by Widdowson (discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis), and the Linguistic Knowledge 1 (LK1) and Linguistic Knowledge 2 (LK2) distinctions proposed by Sharwood Smith (1983:193).

Having outlined the Variable Competence Model and other related theories of SLD, it is expedient to consider what light this research sheds on the problem investigated in this thesis; namely, the inability of ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka to use English for interaction and communication after several years of formal ESL learning. The explanations from a variable competence perspective could be considered in terms of the relationship between,

1. The variability of SL learner performance
2. The variation of learner L2 knowledge in terms of analyticity and automaticity
3. The processes used for actualising L2 knowledge in communication
4. The type of discourse involved

Generally it is suggested that spontaneous interaction involves unplanned discourse; 'discourse that lacks forethought and organized preparation' (Ochs 1979:55). According to SLD theory, there is a close relationship between unplanned discourse and primary processes which exploit unanalyzed knowledge. Language instruction on the other hand activates secondary processes and therefore contributes to analysed knowledge. If primary processes are to be activated and unanalysed knowledge acquired, it is necessary for classrooms to provide some opportunity for natural and spontaneous use of the L2. If there is no such provision, the learners need to be in the way of exposure to unplanned discourse outside the classroom (Ellis 1985:57).

In the case of the Sri Lankan learners, it is possible to make the following assumptions:

1. It is to be expected that the formal instruction that these learners have received would have activated secondary processes and contributed to the development of analysed

knowledge of the L2.

2. The opportunities for spontaneous use in the classroom have been minimal.

3. Exposure to unplanned discourse outside the classroom has not been extensive.

According to the Variable Competence Model and other related research the following different explanations seem possible for the pedagogical problem under discussion:

1. Lacking unanalysed knowledge and the mastery of primary processes which make it possible to activate knowledge gained from formal instruction in unplanned discourse according to Ellis' model.

2. Not being in possession of unanalysed knowledge and automaticity in processing language knowledge according to Bialystok's model.

3. Lacking procedural ability or the control necessary to use the knowledge of the L2 system, according to Bialystok and Sharwood Smith.

4. Inability to use the vernacular style according to Tarone.

5. Insufficient development of the 'capacity' to use knowledge, resulting from concentrating on training rather than education according to Widdowson's 'competence' 'capacity' dichotomy.

According to this SLD perspective, the possible solutions to the problem could be summarized as follows:

1. Providing opportunities for the acquisition of unanalysed knowledge and the exposure to unplanned discourse in the classroom.

2. Providing opportunities for the development of procedural ability (control, processes, capacity) through actual use (practice). According to Ellis' model what would be required would be the development of primary processes.

The inability to cope with the type of processing burden involved in spontaneous interaction (lack of procedural ability) and being unable to draw upon analysed linguistic knowledge to suit ongoing spontaneous discourse,

seems to be a very good explanation of the difficulties faced by the Sri Lankan learners. However, this explanation still leaves some questions unanswered. For example, these learners have difficulty not only in unplanned face to face interaction. They also find planned discourse in which they could draw upon analysed knowledge (i.e speeches, letters etc.) equally difficult. This would suggest that formal instruction has not only been of no avail in activating primary processes, but it has not been successful in making available to the learners analysed knowledge and in activating secondary processes. Their difficulties could not be explained purely in terms of lacking procedural ability or unanalysed knowledge.

In SLD research (as well as in first language research), the whole acquisition process is visualized in terms of the grammar of the language. The empirical work largely consists of research into the acquisition of the grammar of the SL -i.e the morpheme studies. Spontaneous speech data are analysed in terms of the grammatical features that they embody. Sociolinguistic knowledge does not form an intrinsic area in discussions about the L2 knowledge of the learner; similarly, the procedural ability to use sociolinguistic knowledge is also not taken into account. Among those who take sociolinguistic factors into account is Tarone, who discusses sociolinguistic factors in her discussion of the phenomena of style shifting in interlanguage performance. Sharwood Smith in his definition of language knowledge takes into account both linguistic knowledge (LK1) and procedural ability (LK2) and sociolinguistic knowledge. Tarone's style continuum is the SLD explanation that comes closest to the one examined in this thesis: the possibility of the lack of sociolinguistic competence; the culturally conditioned rules and conventions and the ability to use these as being a contributory factor for the inability of ESL learners to use their SL for interaction and communication.

Another problem about SLD models is that these tend to concentrate on SL learner production. Procedural difficulties are envisaged chiefly as being problems in processing the learners own output -in organizing and producing his/her own ideas in the SL. The possibility of perception difficulties affecting performance in the case of face to face interaction and the role of culture specific logical systems of reasoning causing performance problems in written discourse and other types of planned discourse (e.g formal talks, speeches), cannot be lightly dismissed.

Perception difficulties could be of two types. The first could be the difficulty of processing the language spoken at a normal speed, and therefore, a breakdown occurring not because the learner is unable to process his/her knowledge store and formulate responses, but because s/he is disabled from doing so because of the inability to process the input fast enough. This problem could be worsened because of the learner being unable to process the paralinguistic and kinesic features in the speech of his/her interlocutors. The second type of perception difficulty could be due to the learner and his/her interlocutor having reference to different schemata. The learner may be disabled from producing responses because s/he has no access to his/her interlocutor's schema. An example from Butterworth (1978) cited in Hatch (1983:174) seems to indicate this type of breakdown. The answers of the NNS in this dialogue are 'irrelevant' from the point of view of his interlocutor, but relevant according to the NNS's schema. Here the problem is one of perception rather than of production as he is able to produce relevant responses according to his schema, but unable to perceive his interlocutors schema, and to match his responses accordingly.

Both perception and production difficulties could also arise from the culture specificity of logical systems of reasoning. The culture specificity of rhetorical organization is discussed in Kaplan (1966), Clarke and Silberstein (1977), Clyne (1981), Burtoff (1983, cited in Carrell and Eisterhold 1983:561) and Hinds (1984). The partiality in English for linear argumentation can pose problems for ESL/EFL learners who are accustomed to a spiral or circular pattern of argumentation. The different types of rhetorical argumentation are discussed in Kaplan (1966:15) and elsewhere. Here the problem would be, not the lack of linguistic knowledge and procedural ability or the inability to organize concepts, but a mismatch in the rhetorical organization. Linear argumentation could also be responsible for perception difficulties. For example, ESL learners' inability to comprehend a lecture or talk in the SL could result from unfamiliarity with the rhetorical organization of the lecture/talk. Thus, in considering the communications problems in Sri Lanka, it seems a reasonable conclusion to think of these problems as resulting from a multiplicity of reasons. The explanations of these problems offered by SLD theory are not incompatible with the hypothesis suggested in this thesis, but do not provide a complete explanation.

4.3. Why it is Necessary to Include Culture Material in ESL

The arguments that are usually advanced to prove that the use of culture content even if relevant to some type of teaching situations is not relevant for ESL situations where there is no integrative motivation, are summed up in Cook's statement given below. After discussing the possibility of using culture as *content* in ELT materials, Cook goes on to say that,

> 'Cultural content is irrelevant to several other goals. For instance, English is needed as an international language by people who are not interested in British or American culture, or even perhaps dislike it. Culture is also irrelevant if the goals of teaching focus on self development or cognitive processes. While cultural content may suit the integratively motivated student to perfection we should not forget that there are many students in many countries, who do not have this motivation, but who nevertheless want to learn English for various reasons' (Cook 1983:233).

Cook seems to suggest that the only purpose served by cultural content is a social one, where CA facilitates social interaction. In taking this stand, he does not recognize the way in which culture is inseparably linked with language, making it difficult to consider culture and language as being separate. He presupposes that language could operate without resource to culture in the case of some learning and use situations such as in the use of English as an International language. In doing so, he rejects the view that all language incorporates culture. According to his view, it is possible for natural languages such as English to exist in a vacuum and linguistic competence is sufficient to be able to use the language. In denying the need for socio-cultural awareness, the need for sociolinguistic competence is also denied. By concentrating only on culture *content*, he also fails to see the way in which culture affects not only what is expressed in a language, but also how it is expressed.

In failing to recognize the fact that language nourishes and in turn is nourished by culture, a very important feature of language that has great significance for language teaching is overlooked. It is this relationship of language and culture that Hickey describes as something that gets us into difficulties:

> 'for culture tends to disappear into language, then language is engulfed by the system within which it is born and grows' (Hickey 1982:5).

The need to incorporate culture material in ESL could be justified by considering it under three related headings:

1. the relationship between culture, language and CA
2. the relationship between culture and CC
3. the relationship between CC and ESL

These are discussed in sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 below.

4.3.1. The Relationship Between Culture, Language and CA:

In attempting to establish the relationship between culture and language, it becomes necessary to consider what is meant by 'culture' in this context. The concept of culture can be interpreted in different ways. It could mean human civilization in a general sense or the aesthetic achievements of a society in a more restricted sense. A well known definition of culture regards it as:

> 'That complex which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor, quoted in Hoijer 1964:455).

What is meant by culture in relation to language in this thesis, is the 'deep culture' rather than the 'formal culture' (Ladu 1974:129), or what has been termed culture spelt with a simple 'c' (Brooks 1966:87-92). In other words, it is the entire life style of a society, rather than the aesthetic culture or what may be termed the achievements of a people. Though the latter is understandably important in considering the relationship between language and culture, it is necessary to consider the whole life-style of that particular society, for,

> 'every language is inextricably bound up with the whole life experiences of the native users of that language' (Fries quoted in Allan 1969:324).

As the large amount of literature reveals, this subject of the relationship of culture and language is one of great interest, and one that is also controversial. Whether it be a Whorfian who believes that the whole world view of a society is conditioned by its language, or someone who believes that on the contrary,

culture conditions language, or someone who stands on the middle ground, these views converge in accepting that there is indeed a significant relationship between language and culture. Schulz points out that,

> 'the question whether or not language affects the thoughts and culture of the people who use it remains to be answered, and even if we agree it does, we would have difficulty in estimating the extent to which the language we use influences our society. There is no doubt on the other hand, that a language reflects the thoughts, the attitudes the culture of the people who make it and use it' (Schulz 1975:64).

In the view of philosophers such as Langer, the emergence of speech as we know it from a less elaborate system, probably marked the turning point in human civilization (Langer 1962:54-72). At a very basic level the human need for language is closely related to what is around them -or their culture. Thus, language is used to perform acts that fulfil daily needs, and for the expression of emotional needs. All these human needs and their expression can be regarded as being universal. However, on examining the findings of anthropologists, it becomes evident that there are significant differences in the way they are expressed in different societies.

4.3.1.1. The Expression of Meaning in Different Cultures:

Research findings indicate that, in the case of some cultures, silence can be just as expressive as words in particular situations as discussed in relation to western Apache cultures by Basso (1970:67-86) and in the Navajo culture (Saville-Troike 1982:14). In other cultures, whistling replaces speech in particular situations, while in still others, drum beats take its place (Herzog 1964:312). Adams (1972:272) points out that, presentational meanings are defined differently in different cultures, and even connotative gradations tend to be culture specific according to Newman (1964:402). Understandably, there are universals that link the speech habits of these heterogeneous groups; such as the phenomenon of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978, Ferguson 1976), but on the other hand, subtle manifestations of even these universal features are found to be different from one social group to another (Blum-Kulka 1983:37).

In order to see the close relationship between language and culture more clearly, it is necessary to consider some of the more 'exotic' societies of the world. The vast amount of work on Indian, Amerindian and African social

groups provide ample evidence. According to Albert (1972:81-104), the speech of the Barundi is largely dependent on social considerations. A man or woman who is perfectly able to speak clearly and well, would resort to a mumbling, uncouth style in front of 'superiors' such as herders. The topics s/he discusses are laid down by the consensus of society as to what is appropriate for discussion among its members and what is not. Talking about the food consumed at a meal or mentioning the name of a dead person in the presence of relations are taboo topics among the Barundi. Though these particular linguistic taboos are specific to the Barundi, 'in any society be it British or American, Burundi or Nootka, euphemisms, dysphemisms etc. reveal the fears superstitions, prejudices etc. of that particular society' (Schulz 1975:64).

In Sri Lankan culture, parents, grandparents and elders are not generally addressed using the pronominal system. Instead, the relevant kinship terms have to be used in addressing them. Thus it is necessary to say 'Where is mother/father going?' instead of 'Where are you going?' in addressing one's parents. In addressing superiors, teachers and members of the Buddhist clergy, different pro-forms have to be used. The second person pro-forms used in the law courts are not used anywhere else (Disanayaka 1976:5-6). Special vocabulary has to be used is talking to and talking about Buddhist monks.

> 'The staple food of the Sinhalese -*bat* (rice)- becomes *daane* when it is consumed by the monks. While ordinary laymen 'eat' (*kanewa*) their food, Buddhist monks 'respectfully devour' (*walandanewa*). The cup of tea that the layman cherishes so much - *tee* - changes into *gilampasa* when it is respectfully offered to a Buddhist monk. Even the word *ou* (yes) is taboo when the layman is conversing with a monk for he has to use *ehey* or *ehemy* (be it so)' (ibid:7-8).

Though sharing universal features, the world view of different culture tends to be different even at a time when the mass media has brought different cultures closer. Clergymen are generally regarded as being individuals worthy of respect in most if not all cultures. In English speaking cultures special terms such as 'Your Grace' are used in addressing high ranking clergymen such as bishops. In the case of Sri Lankan culture the respectful distance that is regarded as being necessary between the laity and the clergy, influences the way in which the Sinhala language is used in interaction with them. In Sinhala culture the Buddhist monk is on a different plane from the layman, and has to be accorded deep reverance. This is different for instance to English speaking

culture, where the relationship between the clergy and the laity is much closer. Not only do Sinhala speakers know how to speak to and about Buddhist clergy, but they are also aware why they do it. The same rules are observed by non-Buddhist laymen/women in interacting with Buddhist clergy. It is interesting to note the way in which Christian clergy are regarded by Christians in Sri Lanka. In the big cities where western influence pervades and the English language is used in interaction, the laity address the clergy in an informal manner. In rural monolingual communities on the other hand, Christian clergy too are addressed in terms similar to those used in addressing Buddhist monks, even though the special terms for food and eating etc. are not used.

Sociology and anthropology provide insights of language knowledge and language ability. Shutz states that,

> 'Only a small part of my knowledge of the world originates within my personal experience. The greater part is socially derived, handed down to me, by my friends, my parents, my teachers and the teachers of my teachers. I am taught not only to define the environment... but also how typical constructs have to be formed... This includes ways of life, methods of coming to terms with the environment, effective recipes for the use of typical means for bringing about typical ends in typical situations. The typyfying medium *par excellence* by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and syntax of *everyday language*. The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events, and any name includes a typification and generalization referring to the relevance system prevailing in the in-group which found the named thing significant enough to provide a separate term for it' (Schutz 1973:18).

The social origin of language and the role language plays in transmitting this knowledge makes the link between language and culture inevitable.

4.3.1.2. The Concept of CA in Relation to Language:

The two way relationship between culture and language in both influencing and being influenced indicate that this process would not possibly occur without members of that particular society being at least partially conscious of it. Since cultural features such as social relationships affect the evolution of the language, and language in turn helps to fashion the conceptual world of the members of that society, cultural features could be said to underlie

language at both the conscious level and at the unconscious level.

Knowing 'how', the ability to operate linguistically does not necessarily result from knowing 'what' -analytic knowledge of the system or of the culture. In the case of native speakers the 'what' is largely unconscious. Some part of the 'what' of native speaker knowledge could result from conscious instruction on the part of elders and teachers, not in linguistic form, but in social matters. In the Sinhala culture, such issues as the importance of the social hierachy, the relationship between the sexes, attitudes towards elders etc. are consciously brought to the attention of children. Admonitions such as 'Loku ayinta ehema katha karrana honda na' (It is not right that big ones [elders] should be spoken to in that way) or 'Wayasaka udaviyata ehema kiyanne na' ([you] don't say such things to elderly people) or "Ha, ha, wareng kiyanne na' ([You] don't say 'come' [impolite form]) regarding the speech of children are quite common. In such instances, adults are not conveying linguistic knowledge as such, but social/cultural knowledge. This social/cultural knowledge affects the type of language that children do learn to use in speaking to elders. Thus the 'what' is subconsciously absorbed while acquiring the ability to use language (the 'how' of language knowledge). In this sense, language knowledge both in terms of knowing what and knowing how are inseparably bound with CA. 'Awareness' is a more appropriate term in referring to cultural knowledge, as it is never very explicit. Therefore, the term cultural awareness (CA) will be used in preference to cultural knowledge in referring to this concept in the thesis. The awareness of culture which underlies language use manifests itself in linguistic forms in sociolinguistic competence. Sinhala children of yesterday who were instructed about language behaviour towards elders through the type of admonitions cited above, acquired not only the correct ways of using language in interacting with elders (the how) but also absorbed the knowledge (the what) implicitly, as they in turn tend to instruct their children in the same way. Thus though the children are never explicitly taught 'rules' such as 'don't use pronouns in addressing your mother', they acquire the ability to use the complex system of pro-nominal usage by becoming aware of the cultural factors that control their use.

It is thus, a mistake to conclude that native speakers are *totally* unconscious about the 'what' of language. This may be true of linguistic rules but not of sociolinguistic rules. Drawing upon their CA in using language for social interaction is done unconsciously by native speakers, in that no native

speaker generally finds it necessary to stop and think about every social rule involved in interaction. At the same time native speakers are generally able to give explanations as to why sociolinguistic conventions are used the way they are, if called upon to do so. To draw once again upon the culture that is most familiar to the writer (Sinhala culture), the CA behind the use of sociolinguistic conventions is illustrated for example in the disapproval expressed by a woman on being addressed as 'oya' (second person pronoun - familiar) by a stranger, on the grounds that 'mama eyai anduranne na' (that person is not known to me). This statement is a remark of disapproval or explanation for certain types of language behaviour which indicates the importance of the concept of social distance in Sinhala culture, and more importantly demonstrates the Sinhala speakers awareness of it in using and responding to the language. Similarly impolite second person pro forms such as 'umba', 'bung', and 'bola' are sometimes consciously used in venting one's anger or for the purpose of antagonizing an opponent in an argument and calls forth the response that the speaker should remember who s/he is addressing and not use 'carter's' language.

These are examples of the CA of Sinhala speakers. It is necessary to consider how extensive CA in relation to language is, and the way in which native speakers acquire sociolinguistic knowledge and the linguistic formulation (sociolinguistic competence) of this underlying awareness. These issues will be taken up in the next subsections.

4.3.1.2.1. What is Meant by CA:

Like the concept of culture, the concept of CA does not lend itself to clear-cut definitions. In the speech of native speakers, CA manifests itself in a hundred different ways. In attempting to define this rather elusive concept, an extreme example could be regarded as more useful than a lengthy description. Cookridge describing what a spy has to be capable of in order to blend into the background and not arouse suspicion in another culture, draws attention to what CA means in the case of a native:

> 'When one thinks of the little points of knowledge and experience one possesses purely from being brought up in a country -to be familiar with a nursery rhyme, a proverb, or song, to know the name of some famous sportsman or filmstar, to show an awareness of the common attitudes of the community which reflects among other things class and regional differences

> whether related to food and wine, religion or institutions- all this is entailed in the the attempt at blending into the background' (Cookridge, quoted in Goffman 1979:24).

Cookridge's example of native speaker CA given above illustrates the scale of the CA of a member of a particular culture. For example, The CA of someone belonging to the English speaking culture of Britain could incorporate such diverse things as Little Jack Horner, the prodigal son, Rule Britannia, Fleet Street, the football pools, mistletoe, The British Raj, the Union Jack and Ian Botham. Similarly, the CA of someone belonging to the Sinhala speaking culture could possibly incorporate such things as the Dutugamunu Elara war (a historical event), a thovile (exorcism ceremony), ma veni bilinda (a nursery rhyme), kam kam buru (a childrens' game), the Esala Perehara (a national pageant), pirith (Buddhist chants) and Martin Wickremasinghe (celebrated author). It would not be possible to describe all the features of this CA in terms of Tylor's definition of culture quoted above, even after a lifetime of research. If CA on the scale illustrated in Cookridge's example for blending into the culture was also necessary for speaking the language of the culture, then, any attempt to teach the language by creating CA would be futile. However, blending into the background of the SL/FL culture is not a requisite for the SL/FL learner, nor is it necessary for the teacher to undertake a lifetimes' research into the TL culture in order to describe the culture underlying the FL/SL to the learners.

CA in this broad sense could be defined as a general awareness of the entire life style of the culture. However, just as in attempting to define culture, in attempting to define CA one runs into difficulties. In defining CA as an awareness of the general life style, one is assuming that the life style of the culture is shared by all its members. This is not so, as in any culture, there are what could be termed cultures within cultures. Within one large cultural group (for example English speaking Britons or Spanish speaking Spaniards), there are more tightly kit smaller 'culture' groups such as regional cultures, ethnic minority cultures, cultures defined by age, by social status, economic strata, education and so on. However, people belonging to a particular society are able to communicate in spite of these differences, just as much as individuals in a society are able to communicate in spite of individual differences. Tannen draws attention to this type of difference when she says:

> 'Nearly all communication is to some degree cultural in the sense that no two people have exactly the same background, and consequently, precisely the same expectations about interaction' (Tannen 1980:326).

What is important is the fact that individuals are able to interact in spite of regional and other differences. It is true that misunderstandings may occur, but they are generally not of such a magnitude as to make communication impossible. The present writer wishes to suggest that what makes this possible is the existence of a shared culture that could be termed a 'mother culture', that cuts across regional and other differences, and links these different groups together. The term 'shared culture' is used here in its anthropological sense, where it differs from the the concept of universal culture. In his discussion of ndumba plant categories, Hays uses the term 'shared culture' in the sense of collective knowledge. This is differentiated from 'composite culture' –what the individuals know as separate individuals (Hays 1976:489, cited in Casson 1981:269–270). It is also different from universal culture as illustrated in the next section.

4.3.1.2.2. CA and the Concept of Shared Culture:

The difference of this concept of a 'shared culture' from that of universal culture, is that this shared knowledge is highly specific to the culture in question. It is best to illustrate this point with an example. The concept of 'politeness' can be regarded as being universal and thus, part of the universal culture. However, the way in which this concept is perceived in different cultures can be very different. In English speaking culture this concept is more closely linked with the concept of 'privacy' and 'social distance' than with 'age' and 'kinship' as it is in Sinhala culture. It is also more verbalized in English speaking culture than it is in Sinhala speaking culture. Thus, the concepts of privacy and social distance manifest themselves in verbalized polite forms in English, while the age and kinship concepts of Sinhala culture manifest themselves in the polite forms of Sinhala, and still more importantly in the paralinguistic and kinesic features of Sinhala speech. Thus, the concept of 'politeness' can be regarded as part of universal culture, while the way in which it is perceived forms part of the shared culture of each society. It forms part of the shared culture because this attitude to politeness is shared by the different regional, educational and other cultural groups to a great extent. Similarly, because of its importance in Anglo–Saxon culture, a Briton is likely to

regard 'privacy' as being a universal concept and in fact the English language mirrors this concept. On examining other cultures, it becomes evident that this concept is by no means universal. Privacy in the English sense of 'to be able to do certain things unobserved by other people as everyone would want to, and need to' is not recognized in Sinhala culture, in Polish culture (Wierzbicka 1985:164) or in Malagasy culture (Ochs Keenan 1976:68) to name a few. Both Wierzbicka and Ochs Keenan discuss the way in which the existence or the non-existence of this concept is related to language use. Wierzbicka also discusses the way in which the non-existence of this concept in Polish creates problems for Polish speakers of English. Wierzbicka points out that there is no comparable term for privacy in the above mentioned sense in Polish (op. cit.) nor is there such a term in Sinhala (J. B. Disanayaka, personal communication). Wierzbicka demonstrates the relationship between this concept and indirect speech acts in English which are particularly difficult for Polish speakers. This is also true of Sinhala. Thus, it seems reasonable to surmise that though the shared culture of a particular cultural group has certain things in common with universal human culture (politeness in this case), it is not identical to it.

The shared culture of a particular people is the result of things that are shared irrespective of regional, economic and other differences. This shared culture can be regarded as one of the things contributing to the sense of national identity. It is of course not possible to 'list' what the shared culture consists of, any more than the components of culture or CA. This would be even more meaningless than trying to list language 'needs'. The shared culture of a particular society is best illustrated by quoting a few examples. Since the subject of this thesis is ESL, it seems to be reasonable to draw upon English culture once again for the purpose of illustration. If native English speakers of Britain as a group are considered as an example, irrespective of regional and other differences it is possible to say with a fair degree of certainty that they would all be aware of things such as the following: who the present monarch of Britain is, who is Prime Minister at present, the most recent battle Britain was engaged in, when the clocks go back, the most popular national sports, the name of the queen's residence and so on. There is bound to be a good deal of agreement as to the following: which parts of the country are hilly, the most common flowers in the countryside, the most important industries, the most popular TV shows etc. At a more linguistic level, 'hello' and 'goodbye' would be understood as greeting whether they were uttered in Edinburgh or

Cardiff, Lerwick or the Isle of Man. These are a few examples of what the shared culture consists of.

What was attempted in this section was to establish the relationship between language and culture in general and to outline the concept of CA as a preliminary step in arguing for the need to be aware of the culture underlying a language in order to 'know' it and to be able to use it appropriately. In order to demonstrate this point further, it is necessary to consider more closely the relationship between culture and language at a linguistic level than has been attempted so far. It is also necessary to consider the question of how 'conscious' native speakers of a language are of the underlying cultural assumptions in using the language. These questions will be considered in the following sections, before going on to discuss the the issue of culture in language teaching.

4.3.2. The Relationship Between Culture and Communicative Competence:

CC is closely related to culture because of sociolinguistic competence; the knowledge and ability to use language conventions conditioned by CA. Sociolinguistic competence entails the knowledge and ability to use conventions appropriately in social contexts. This is because appropriacy is largely a matter of social judgement. Though translating the linguistic meaning of a sentence is fairly straightforward, it is not at all easy to translate contextual meaning. What is said and what is meant are sometimes completely different, and also what is said could be interpreted differently by different people and in different contexts. CA is essential for the right interpretation.

4.3.2.1. The Use of Sociolinguistic Conventions:

Though 'social formulae' are discussed in modern grammars and lexicons, the growth and variability of socio-cultural conventions makes it impossible to reduce all these to well laid down rules. It is not easy to distinguish rules from conventions, as there are points at which they merge. Though sociolinguistic conventions are not laid down in prescriptive grammars, they are very important in communication.

Two of the characteristic features of sociolinguistic conventions seem to be

1. their dynamic quality

2. their cultural specificity

Socio-cultural conventions can be regarded as being dynamic because new conventions are being created and existing conventions are being changed all the time. Grammatical, morphological and phonological rules are slower in changing. It is possible to witness the change in a convention such as the conventional greeting 'how are you?' to 'hi'. Ferguson outlines this change as having taken place in several stages: from 'how are you?' to 'hawaye' or 'haye' to 'hiya' to 'hi'. This change has taken place within the space of about forty years (Ferguson 1976:147).

The importance of sociolinguistic conventions in interaction, is revealed in the attitude of society towards the use and abuse of these conventions. Being 'unconventional' in language use is not as serious a charge as being 'ungrammatical', but the judgement of society can be harsh, depending on the circumstances under which someone is unconventional. Not conforming to sociolinguistic conventions because of conscious choice (if it is recognized as such) will often be regarded with good humored tolerance and may even be applauded. Non-conformity because of ignorance on the other hand is condemned and derided.

The importance attached to sociolinguistic conventions, by members of a society is illustrated by the conscious attempt made by parents to teach these to children, and to correct them when they use these wrongly (Gleason and Weintraub 1976:130, 134, Firth 1972:33 quoted in Ferguson 1976:149, Griep and Gleason 1980:166). The fact that the absence of a conventional greeting is noticed (Sacks 1968:362, Ferguson 1976:150), that non-conformity could effectively hinder communication (Schegloff 1968:362, Godard 1977), and also the fact that non-conformity could result in amusement or irritation (Ferguson 1976:143) or lead to harsh social judgements and ridicule (Lakoff 1973:49) indicate the importance of these conventions. If we agree with Bolinger that 'much of what passes for communication is rather the equivalent of a handclasp, or an embrace, its purpose is sociability' (Bolinger 1975:524, quoted in Richards 1983:249), the importance of sociolinguistic conventions becomes understandable. Thus, in order to communicate appropriately and effectively, it is necessary to have not only a degree of linguistic competence but also awareness of the socio-cultural conventions of the language, which has been termed socio-cultural or sociolinguistic competence. For someone learning a

SL/FL to be linguistically competent, it is necessary to acquire/learn the grammatical, syntactic and morphological rules of the language and the ability to use this knowledge. But to have CC in that language, it is also necessary to acquire/learn the sociolinguistic rules of use and develop the mastery in using these.

4.3.2.2. Sociolinguistic Conventions and Social Meaning:

Young children exposed to a different language and a different culture, learn both the rules of the new language and its conventions regarding appropriateness, with ease. This is often ascribed to biological factors, which are believed to make language learning easier for children between certain ages. The socio-cultural implications of this ability are not generally recognized or considered. Patowski (1980:449-472) draws attention to this point, in discussing the sensitive period for the acquisition of syntax in a second language. Speaking of the greater success of a younger experimental group, he says,

> '...this also has social implications as the younger group were in a better position to identify themselves with the socio-culture around them, than the older group. They were more open to new ideas -ready to absorb- unlike the older group, who were wary of such things. The same holds true for faster acquisition of second languages by children. Not only the language, but they can understand and assimilate and respond to the culture more quickly' (Patowski 1980:449).

In relation to the issues discussed in this chapter, Patowski's statement is important as it reveals the link between CA and language learning.

The link between culture and CC also becomes visible in that CC depends to some extent on being able to say what society expects you to say. Theoretically, a native speaker's linguistic competence enables him/her to produce any novel sentence s/he likes, but native speakers do not produce novel utterances all the time (Richards 1983:246). As Firth points out,

> '...most of the give and take of conversation in our everyday life is stereotyped and very narrowly conditioned by our particular type of culture. It is a sort of roughly prescribed social ritual, in which you generally say what the other fellow expects you one way or another to say' (Firth 1964:69).

Linguistic competence provides very few clues as to what the 'other fellow' expects you to say in a given context. What the other fellow expects you to say is often produced in the form of social formulae, prefabricated patterns, chunks and routines.

In SLD theory and in FLD studies, prefabricated patterns and routines are regarded as being a feature of the early stages of language development (Hakuta 1976:321-351, Krashen 1981a:83-99, Ellis 1984:65-81 among others). In SLD research routines are also regarded as being 'part of a system that is separate from the processes generating rule governed propositional language' (Krashen 1981a:86). It is also suggested that formulaic speech is resorted to by children in acquiring a SL because of the need to establish social contact via language (Fillmore 1976:670 quoted in Krashen 1981a:95). This is a very important insight, as it explains a key feature of formulaic language use. Fillmore's and Hakuta's subjects needed and were able to establish contact by using formulaic language. The success of this strategy indicates that hearers respond well to formulaic language, and this contributes to the smooth conduct of communication. This is illustrated in adult SL data presented by Hatch (1983:152-187). Of two conversational extracts involving the same L2 speaker and a native speaker, one has almost no formulaic expressions (ibid:177), and the other one has several, such as 'that's nice', 'you're doing fine', 'thank you' and 'you're kind' (ibid:179). Of these two, the second conversation progresses far more smoothly than the first. In the present writer's own experience, native speakers who show signs of getting ready to make a concentrated effort to understand speech on seeing a foreigner approach by stopping whatever they are doing, through body posture (bending down/inclining head towards the speaker) and facial expression (look of intense concentration), relax the moment they hear commonplace prefabricated patterns such as 'half a dozen/two/three/medium sized etc. _____ please' or 'a single/return to _____ ' etc. and formulaic expressions such as 'nice day', 'lovely morning' and so on.

Formulaic expressions can also be regarded as an attempt to produce utterances that are 'lively' but at the same time easy for the hearer to respond to. Though unique creativity in language is admired in poets and writers, poetic creativity would only lead to breakdown in ordinary communication as the average listener is not ready or willing nor is it possible for him/her to engage in the kind of processing that is required to understand unique poetic creativity

in ordinary conversation. The concept of 'divine madness' attributed to poets, demonstrates the layman's attitude towards unique creativity. The average language user's compromise is formulaic language. Formulaic language could be regarded as being 'creative' in its own right, as each formulaic expression could be regarded as originally being someone's unique creation, that has subsequently been adopted by the rest of society.

In his discussion of social routines, Ferguson draws attention to the cultural specificity of the structure and incidence even of certain phenomenon found to be universal in human societies (ibid:142). He points out that, a very important area of language -formulaic language- has been neglected by linguists and psycholinguists because of their concentration on the creative aspects of language (ibid:150). He also demonstrates the way in which formulaic language of politeness facilitates social interaction and goes on to state that,

> 'The importance of our trivial, muttered, more or less automatic polite phrases becomes clear when they are omitted or not acknowledged' (ibid:140).

He also makes the important point that aphasics who have trouble with speech in general, may continue to use conventionalized language forms with impressive fluency. This point is interesting also in relation to elderly people whose memory has dimmed. Though not producing much in the way of creative language, they continue to use a fair amount of ritualized language. Some of them tend to use particular 'chunks' over and over again.

4.3.2.3. Conscious and Unconscious Knowledge of Culture in Language Use:

In the preceding sections, an attempt was made to demonstrate the link between CA and CC, by discussing the importance of socio-cultural conventions in using language for communication and by outlining the way in which the socio-cultural concepts embedded in these conventions result from cultural thought patterns (4.3.1). It was also suggested that in the case of native speakers CA is largely unconscious, though conscious teaching too contributes to this knowledge (4.3.1.3). The extent to which a native speaker's CA is conscious is of interest in relation to the pedagogical issue of culture in language teaching which will be discussed in the next section (4.3.3).

In the case of native speakers of a language, both linguistic knowledge and

sociolinguistic knowledge are acquired. This knowledge is acquired by living in the society where the language is spoken, through exposure to actual use and by actually engaging in social interaction. In order to achieve one's goals in communication it is necessary to use the most effective methods. Therefore, though it is possible to use a sign language or devise a language of one's own or use unique creative language, native speakers do not generally do this. Instead they discover the best methods used by others in the culture and follow suit. These methods are discovered by trial and error, by observation, unconscious assimilation and active participation. The society of which s/he is a member helps the native speaker both within and outside the level of consciousness. Outside the level of consciousness, this is done by making him/her feel a part of the society, by providing input and by initiating him/her into different types of interaction in different types of social situations. Most linguistic and sociolinguistic rules are acquired in this way. However, conscious instruction too plays its part. There is evidence in child language studies, that routines such as greeting conventions, expression of thanks and special situation specific routines such as the *trick or treat* routine discussed by Gleason and Weintraub (1976:129-136) are specially brought to the child's notice by adults in the form of 'say ____ ' or 'what do you say?'. Gleason and Weintraub point out that these are taught *situationally*. The examples from Sinhala discussed in 4.3.1.3 also support this argument. Gleason and Weintraub go on to suggest that children are initiated in to the 'Bye bye' routine long before they are able to talk (ibid:135) and hypothesize that this particular routine may be important in the development of the child's conceptual world. There is evidence that this type of teaching goes on in other cultures too. Ferguson (1976:149) cites an example from Firth (1972:33) where children in Baganda culture are taught greeting and farewell routines before they could speak.

According to Gleason and Weintraub, a certain amount of conscious teaching goes on at the linguistic level too, but in this case a lexical item is for example taught by embedding it in 'a number of frames: See the doggie? That's a doggie. The doggie is eating his dinner' etc. Though CA in the case of a native speaker can be regarded as resulting from the assimilation of the reality around her/him and therefore acquired largely in an unconscious manner, these examples show that at least part of it is consciously conveyed. Even in the case of the example of lexical teaching quoted above, it is possible

to hypothesize that it leads not only to making the child aware that the object with tail, four legs etc. = dog, but also to the awareness of his/her schematic world in the shape of the dog schema, and therefore to his/her CA. Therefore, in the case of native speakers, it is possible to conclude that CA is chiefly the result of an unconscious process but that conscious teaching too has a role in its formulation.

The next point to consider, is how consciously aware of the cultural features a native speaker is in using sociolinguistic conventions. As discussed in 4.3.1.3 in relation to the use of the Sinhala second person pronoun (familiar form), native speakers are able to provide explanations as to why they use certain sociolinguistic conventions the way they do. Very often, these explanations come far more easily to the native speaker than explanations as to why they use particular grammatical structures. It is not suggested that native speakers consciously think of the cultural features each time they use a sociolinguistic convention. Nevertheless, their ability to provide far more satisfactory explanations as to why they use particular sociolinguistic conventions seems to indicate the close relationship between CA and sociolinguistic conventions. For example a native speaker's awareness as to what particular idioms in his/her language would give offence, regulates his/her use of them depending on whether s/he wants to be abusive or not, and depending on how abusive s/he wants to be if the intention is to abuse and on whether the abuse is merely meant to embarass/humiliate or whether it is used as a means of provoking a quarrel. Similarly, in performing speech acts such as placating, insinuating, flattering etc. native speakers use culture conditioned language suited to the person, situation, speech event etc. and are for the most part aware of doing it and are able to explain why they do it if called upon to do so and if they choose to do so.

If in the case of native speakers CA is for the most part acquired, and the CA that underlies the use of sociolinguistic conventions is for the large part unconscious, how does this fit in with the idea of making ESL learners culturally aware in order to improve sociolinguistic competence and in turn CC? Can these sociolinguistic conventions be taught? One of the important points that need to be taken into account here is that in the case of native speakers, linguistic competence too is acquired through exposure and use. This does not mean that it cannot be taught consciously in the classroom. Also in recent times, the 'traditional' concept that abstract rules should be consciously taught,

which had fallen into disfavour and disuse has been reclaimed and backed by modern psychological evidence. It has been suggested that especially in the case of adults, the conscious teaching of abstract rules would be beneficial for improving ESL competence (McLaughlin et al. 1983:157). Understandably, sociolinguistic conventions do not lend themselves to conscious teaching quite in the same way as linguistic rules, as they are more difficult to pin down. It makes teaching sociolinguistic conventions more difficult –not impossible. In the case of both linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, unconscious learning would be greatly beneficial and therefore in the case of SL/FL learners too, it would be best if sociolinguistic competence can be acquired through exposure and use. However, in the case of SL learners such as those in Sri Lanka, opportunities for acquiring sociolinguistic conventions through exposure are minimal. From a teaching point of view, providing CA basically recognizes the general supposition that knowing why something happens the way it does makes it easier to understand how it happens. Therefore, in the case of ESL/EFL learners who are not able to acquire the 'whys' and 'wherefores' through sufficient exposure and actual use, it is necessary to provide this information, as well as providing as much exposure and opportunities for use as possible.

It is suggested that by providing information as to when, where, with whom, ritualized language, routines, formulaic speech, idioms etc. could be used, together with explanatory information as to why these are used the way they are, and by providing opportunities in the classroom for the learners to use these, it is possible to improve the learners knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions and the ability to use them.

On taking the stand that in the case of ESL/EFL learners it is necessary to consciously teach conventions by promoting CA, the next question that needs to be considered is whether there is any evidence that sociolinguistic conventions can be taught. As discussed earlier in this section, child language studies show that at least some of the sociolinguistic routines are explicitly brought to the children's notice by adults. In SLD research, Ellis suggests in relation to his research that prefabricated patterns and routines are in fact learnt more easily than linguistic rules (1984:81). Though greeting conventions etc. form but a small part of sociolinguistic competence, and though it is not possible to replicate the type of process that goes on in initiating children into using sociolinguistic conventions in the case of adult learners, the fact that

most of the instruction in the case of children takes place *situationally* is of interest here. It seems a reasonable supposition that the more ritualized sociolinguistic conventions can be taught by providing information about the type of performance called for by the situation. the process can be further expedited by providing background cultural information about these sociolinguistic conventions, such as the situational constraints, participant requirements and so on.

In considering the question whether sociolinguistic conventions can be taught, the fact that ESL/EFL learners are already aware of the socio-cultural features that underlie their MT should not be overlooked. Having one system with which the SL/FL system could be compared is advantageous, as in teaching the sociolinguistic conventions of the SL/FL, it could be done through comparison and contrast, which could be facilitative. McLaughlin et al. referring to linguistic knowledge point out that, in the case of adult learners:

> 'Some higher level abstract knowledge of linguistic structure is likely to help adult learners process a second language' (1983:53).

It is possible to argue that adult learners who are unable to acquire sociolinguistic knowledge through exposure and use would similarly benefit from conscious knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions.

Conscious teaching of CA and sociolinguistic conventions in a classroom can be broadly summarized as:

1. introducing sociolinguistic conventions
2. introducing cultural knowledge that explains these conventions
3. providing opportunities for using the cultural knowledge gained and for using sociolinguistic conventions in actual interaction.

In providing lesson material embodying the above mentioned features, it is envisaged that the conscious learning necessary in the case of learners who do not have sufficient exposure and opportunities for use, would be facilitated. At the same time, it is possible to hypothesize that through exposure to culture materials and through the opportunities provided for using sociolinguistic

conventions in the classroom, a certain amount of unconscious assimilation and therefore 'acquisition' would also take place. Apart from developing sociolinguistic *knowledge* through CA in order to achieve sociolinguistic competence and in turn CC, it is also necessary to provide means for facilitating the improvement of the learners' ability to use this knowledge for interaction and communication. Conscious teaching has a role to play in this process too. Teaching materials consciously designed to provide opportunities for use (practice) can expedite automaticity and fluency. 'Consciousness' can be of two types: conscious teaching on the part of the teacher and conscious learning on the part of the learner. While the former would be present in different guises in the materials, in the case of the learner, the learning would not always be conscious. While cultural information will be absorbed consciously by the learners' attention being drawn to it, there will also be unconscious learning taking place through the exposure to and use of sociolinguistic conventions in the classroom.

What is important is to make sure that these learners' sociolinguistic competence as well as their linguistic competence should be developed through the teaching programme. As both conscious teaching and unconscious exposure could contribute to this goal and since these can co-exist, it is possible and necessary to make use of both in teaching materials developed with the aim of developing ESL/EFL CC through CA and sociolinguistic competence. The teaching methodology that need to be adopted in order to teach CA will be discussed in 4.6.

4.3.3. Culture and Language Teaching:

There is a considerable amount of literature on the theme of the place of culture in language teaching in general, and culture in relation to the teaching of English in particular. The views on this subject vary, from those who think that as far as English is concerned culture is not at all important, to those who think that it is not possible to teach or learn how to use a language appropriately without referring to its background culture, and that this is true of English as well as of other languages. The following set of citations express these different views:

> 'If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meanings'

(Politzer quoted in Brooks 1966:85).

'If a student (or teacher) is unaware of the cultural connotations of a word, he does not know the meaning of that word -irrespective of whether he is able to voice it or translate it' (Seelye 1974:4).

'In order to help students to acquire a certain command of the language, and effective communication in it, the teacher has to provide them with an adequate cultural orientation' (Muto 1979:77).

'Natural language neither arises nor functions in a vacuum, but always forms part of a wider culture from which it derives its significance. There is really only 'language in culture' just as there is only 'meaning in culture'. There is no such thing as knowing a language without knowing systematically or not the culture of which it is a constitutional element and which allows it to function. In each particular speech event this knowledge determines behaviour, and interpretation of behaviour, in the light of surrounding circumstances' (Hickey 1980:475).

'... it is very important to try to link language specific norms of interaction with specific cultural values, such as the autonomy of the individual and anti-dogmatism of Anglo-Saxon culture or cordiality and warmth in Polish culture' (Wierzbicka 1985:176).

'It (the English language) can operate in a cultural void.. cultural factors do not appear to be an essential characteristic of the operation of the English language' (Guthrie, quoted in Prator 1978:472).

'English has become a world language, the common property of all cultures, and with English it is no longer true that to learn the language one must learn its culture' (Hamp-Lyons 1983:146).

As these views illustrate, the language teaching profession seem to be divided on the question of the need to teach CA as part of the language teaching programme. The belief that English can be 'reduced' to a simple code without cultural overtones, which could be used by anyone belonging to any language group, could be seen in the concepts of Basic English, Nuclear English and ESP.

Widdowson, while subscribing to the view that ESP is divorced from primary cultures, does not concede that natural languages can be divorced

from their cultural source without some harm to the language concerned and also to its speakers. Discussing the role of English as an international language, Widdowson poses an interesting question and also provides an answer.

> 'Is it possible, then, to conceive of English or any other natural language operating only as a communicative amenity, as an entirely neutral medium for the conveying of information? This is what people seem to have in mind when they talk of English as an International Language. But there are dangers here too. A language stripped down to the bare essentials as a resource for impersonal references is deprived at the same time of its potential for creativity and change, and the humanity of its users is diminished accordingly' (Widdowson 1982:11-12).

Basic English, ESP and more recently the concept of EIAL (English as an International Auxiliary Language) have all had their share in propagating the concept of an English devoid of cultural overtones, an English that is merely a medium for the conveyance of referential meaning. This is a comfortable definition in many ways for both native speakers of English and for those who use English as a SL/FL. In the case of native speakers, it prevents them from being regarded as advocating the imposition of their culture on others. In the case of speakers of other languages (especially in former British colonies), it prevents them from being seen as the advocates for the continued imposition of an alien culture.

That this need for an English divorced from culture is particularly felt in relation to former British colonies is revealed when seen in relation to other language teaching/learning situations. This question does not become an issue in relation to the teaching and learning of languages other than English, or in the case of learning a language as a FL. Teaching CA is freely advocated in the case of ESL learners' in countries where, the learners' SL is also the country's official language: e.g immigrants or the overseas student population in the USA, minority ethnic groups in Australia and New Zealand. It is also advocated in the case of EFL learners in countries such as Thailand, Iran and Japan which have no history of being British colonies. CA is also thought of as being appropriate in teaching German to British learners or French to Americans. Gatbonton and Tucker (1971:137-143), discuss the need to teach American culture to Filipino students learning American literature in the Philippines.

The evidence on the relationship between language and culture examined in the previous section clearly illustrates that culture is a factor that should be taken into account in language teaching, whether it is ESL or EFL. This evidence also shows that the arguments for culture-free ESL/EFL cited above are without basis. In the preceding page an attempt was made to demonstrate both the relationship between language and culture and culture and language learning. It seems reasonable to conclude that language incorporates culture, is enriched by it and is therefore inseparably linked with it. It is also possible to visualize the need to be aware of the underlying culture in order to 'know' a language, especially in the sense of knowing the way in which meaning is negotiated using it. From a pedagogical point of view, what is still more important is the fact that CA is necessary not only to 'know' a language but in order to use it. In this sense, CA is closely linked with proficiency in using the language. At a basic level, learning culture specific features such as conventionalized language forms would enable learners to use the language more proficiently. At a higher level, cultural features that are linked to a greater or lesser degree with all sociolinguistic aspects of language use, could be exploited profitably to improve learners' language proficiency. Thus by improving the knowledge and the ability to use sociolinguistic rules in communication, CA would indirectly help to improve language proficiency.

However, culture in relation to language teaching is a sensitive issue. Therefore, it is only to be expected that it is regarded halfheartedly by applied linguists and educationists. Apart from the need to overcome the fears and reluctance to teach CA as part of the ESL programme, there are also many other questions that need to be considered. These will be discussed in the next section.

4.4. Problems in Incorporating Culture Material in ESL:

Incorporating culture material in a language course is a major undertaking. When all the arguments are in favour of as narrow a specification of English as possible for ESL programmes, the problem in justifying the kind of range and variety that culture material would necessarily bring into an ESL course, becomes evident. Apart from this, there is the problem of defining culture in such a context. On considering Tylor's definition of culture discussed in 4.3.1, it becomes clear that culture in this sense cannot be confined within specified bounds. It is not possible to say that culture is made of *n* things, or *n* things

form the entity called culture and therefore, if someone is aware of *n* things, s/he knows the particular culture under discussion. Tylor's definition does give an idea of the broad bounds of culture, but it does not provide much help in trying to approach the concept from a language teaching angle.

CA on a native speaker scale could normally result only from having membership in a particular culture. Another problem in trying to pin down the notion of culture for pedagogical purposes is its chameleon quality. Culture is dynamic, in that it is changing and evolving all the time just as language is. In this sense, the acculturation of anyone belonging to a particular culture is an ongoing process. Acculturation continues to take place throughout a life time. Trying to define culture is therefore problematic and it is important to realize that this concept cannot be reduced to a neat definition.

Though the concept of culture cannot be reduced to a neat and precise definition, in order to make the concept of culture meaningful for pedagogical purposes it becomes necessary to narrow it down. There are several ways of doing this. One possibility is to pick just a few aspects of the concept of culture and leave out the others. However, as language is related to every aspect of culture, it is not possible to make arbitrary decisions as to which aspects to select and which to leave out. Another possibility is to isolate the main nodes that hold the network together and to narrow the notion of culture to incorporate these main nodes. This is the approach adopted here. A working definition of culture is formulated by concentrating on the main nodes of the culture network.

By considering the main purpose served by language in a culture -communication, it is possible to arrive at the hub of a culture: the individuals who are members of it and the relationships between them. Linked to the individuals are the thought patterns, the activities and the institutions of a culture. Surrounding all this is the physical reality of the environment in which the individuals live, relationships are established, thought patterns evolve, institutions have their being and activities take place. Therefore, for the purpose of language teaching, CA could be regarded as awareness of the life style, the thought patterns, the relationships and the activities of the people who belong to the culture and the physical reality surrounding these. This is by no means a satisfactory definition, but helps to bring the concept of culture from a highly abstract level to a more practical one. This working definition

still encompasses so much, that, trying to impart awareness of the culture to the learners of a SL/FL in this more circumscribed sense is still a difficult task. In considering this working definition of culture in relation to ESL in an attempt to incorporate culture material into language teaching courses, several questions arise. These are related to the problem of cultures within cultures discussed in 4.3.1.3.1, the dynamic quality of culture discussed earlier on in this section, the diversity and immensity of cultural features and the problem of learner 'needs'. These questions could be roughly considered under three headings:

1. In relation to English, the culture of which group should be taught? British? American? Middle Class? Working Class?
2. What type of learner is in need of this type of awareness?
3. How much of it need to be taught?

These questions will be considered separately.

4.4.1. Whose Culture Should be Made the Model:

As English is spoken as a MT by different people in the world, it is not possible to speak of 'British culture' underlying English in quite the same way as 'Sinhala culture' underlying Sinhala. Even if there is agreement on the concept of a shared culture, there is still the problem of whose culture should come into ESL/EFL teaching programmes.

There are good reasons for opting for British sociolinguistic conventions in relation to language teaching situations such as Sri Lanka, where the grammar, spelling etc. taught in ESL classes is that of standard British English. The only area that differs significantly is pronunciation, as no attempt is made to teach RP. This is not an important aspect, as the notion of a standard pronunciation is not the same as that of a standard grammar, morphology or syntax, as many native speakers of English who speak 'standard English' in relation to grammar, morphology and syntax, may speak with accents other than RP. This does not make their speech 'non-standard'. Therefore, if the grammar, morphology and syntax taught in a particular ESL/EFL situation conforms to British norms, it seems reasonable to teach the sociolinguistic rules that go with it. Due to historical reasons (discussed in 2.2), the development of the English language in Sri Lanka is closely linked with Britain. This factor too makes British

sociolinguistic conventions an obvious choice.

Apart from this, sociolinguistic conventions related to greetings, etc. are shared across different English MT situations, and tend to be 'standard' in that sense too. This is not surprising since all these MT varieties of English sprang from the same root. The influence of the Anglo-Saxon culture is still visible in all these varieties is spite of being adopted to suit new environments.

According to Kaplan, these Anglo-Saxon cultural patterns are not limited to conventions that underlie face to face interaction, but can also be seen in the discourse structure.

> 'The English language and its related thought patterns have evolved out of the Anglo-European cultural pattern. It is not a better or worse system but it is different' (Kaplan 1966:3).
>
> '...each culture has a paragraph order unique to itself, and... part of the learning of a language is the mastering of its logical system' (Ibid:14).

4.4.2. The Type of Learners Who Need Cultural Awareness:

Some educationists and linguists, while recognizing the need to convey CA, seem to feel that, it is relevant only for learners with an integrative motivation (Cook 1983:233). It is felt that ESL learners such as those in Sri Lanka who for the most part have instrumental motives for learning English, will not benefit from being taught CA. This argument does not seem valid, in the light of arguments previously advanced in this thesis.

Being able to write logical paragraphs, reading authentic texts and listening to authentic speech are skills not limited to learners who have an integrative motivation. Any learner of a language would be required to master these skills to be able to use the language for communication, and if in order to do so, it is necessary to possess a degree of socio-cultural awareness, then, it is only logical to suppose that this CA is necessary for all learners of a language irrespective of whether they have an integrative motivation or not. This would be true of such categories as ESP, EOP, EAP too.

Though there is some truth in the statement that the subject matter in a scientific text for example, could be understood to some extent by merely looking at the content words, this is only partly true. The culture conditioned

logical system comes into play even in the reading of such texts. Hinds (1984:45-70) discusses different types of texts in relation to the Japanese *Ki-sho-ten-ketsu* framework, and the importance of this cultural framework in information retention and recall among Japanese. On the other hand, no learner's language needs are narrowly confined to occupational purposes or academic purposes, hence the need to incorporate culture material in the case of all types of learners.

4.4.3. The Fear of Anomie and How it can be Averted:

This question as discussed earlier in 3.5.3 is a sensitive issue. It is my view that, any culture cannot be safeguarded by shielding those who belong to it, from the knowledge of cultures other than their own. No one is easily induced to change one system for another, unless strongly convinced that the system they want to adopt is a great deal better than their own. This is where the answer to the above problem lies.

The reason for the deterioration of the status of the indigenous languages under domination is a result of the way in which these languages were regarded in relation to the conqueror's language. Apart from that, material and social advantages were largely responsible for this language choice. In spite of the elite status still attached to English in Sri Lanka and other ESL situations, the position of the indigenous languages is now secure, and there is no threat of these languages being obliterated by English. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the exposure to cultural features of the SL would result in the rejection of the indigenous cultures and languages.

The linguistic/anthropological perspective which regards no language or culture as being deficient in any way, as they are able to serve the required functions of a particular community, is the right perspective to adopt in language teaching. The importance of this type of approach in language teaching is discussed by McLeod (1976:211).

In a country such as Sri Lanka, where English has unfortunately acquired elite status, it is essential to make learners aware that this is something that has been *imposed* on the language. Beginning with the premise that a foreign culture is beyond the learners' grasp only leads to the continuation of this false sense of elitism. There is no question of shielding learners from other cultures, as they see and hear all about these in the mass media. The

difference, is that what they see and hear is not exactly geared to language learning. The teacher's task is to approach the whole concept of the SL culture from a teaching perspective, to facilitate the task at hand: teaching the language -which means teaching how to use the language appropriately.

4.4.4. The Place of the Culture Material in Language Teaching Courses:

In deciding on the amount of culture material to be used in language courses, it is necessary to take into account the type of language activities that already form the language course, the learners' age, their grasp of lower level grammar and vocabulary, and the time available. It is important that the culture component should not be tagged on as an adjunct.

Though the 'culture component' is treated as a separate unit for the purpose of definition and explanation, in actual teaching it should not be treated as such. For example, in using a text for comprehension, a teacher would make it point to 'digress', in order to draw attention to vocabulary, style, writer's attitude and so on. This is indirectly related to the comprehension of the text, and is a necessary procedure to draw conclusions about the overall meaning of the text. Including a cultural dimension in essence means adding to this list of activities by drawing attention to cultural overtones in the text, to the way in which use conventions are related to cultural features and by providing opportunities to use these sociolinguistic conventions.

The socio-cultural component should also be viewed in relation to the grammatical component. The linguistic component should have its due place in the teaching programme, as both these components together form CC. If grammar and vocabulary teaching is done through a communicative framework, it would be more in harmony with what is attempted in the sociolinguistic component. In other words, the linguistic component too should be viewed in terms of actual use. In this way, it would be possible to fuse the linguistic and sociolinguistic elements, to make particular grammatical points more meaningful. For example, the English modals could be taught more effectively in relation to sociolinguistic rules and conventions of politeness.

Since the reason for including a CA component is to provide an explanation for the particular way in which language is used, both 'use' and 'usage' need to go together (Widdowson 1979:2). As, 'there is no question that the effective employment of communication strategies presupposes grammatical

competence and knowledge of the culture' (Gumperz 1980:5), it is essential for these to go together. It is also not possible to treat one component as more important than the other (Canale 1983:8).

Having considered these general questions in relation to the integration of culture material in the overall teaching programme, it is possible to go on to consider what type of culture materials would facilitate the development of cultural awareness and in turn improve sociolinguistic competence and CC.

4.5. The Composition of the Culture Component

In deciding on the type of culture material that would be most useful in an ESL course, it would be pertinent to consider this material in terms of the working definition of culture formulated in 4.4. According to this working definition, it would be possible to incorporate texts and discourse that illustrate culture specific features of the relationships, institutions, activities and thought patterns of people belonging to the English speaking culture, the physical realities of the environment in which they live and how these are reflected in the English language.

Though culture comes into every aspect of language use, it is possible to isolate certain areas in which cultural influence is marked. For example, in the case of culture specific aspects of initiating and maintaining relationships through communication in the English speaking culture, conventionalized language forms play an important role. As Coulmas points out,

> 'In every society there are standardized communication situations in which its members react in an automatic manner. Routines reflect in a sense a conception of a social system..' (1981:2).

Garvey (1977:43) also discusses the conventionalized nature of routines. Closely related are formulae and also institutionalized or lexicalized sentence stems (Pawley and Syder 1983:191-226) acquired *en bloc*, by the native speaker. According to Pawley and Syder,

> 'the stock of lexicalized sentence stems known to the ordinary mature speaker of English amounts to hundreds of thousands' (Ibid:192).

Many routines, formulae and other conventionalized language forms are politeness related, and 'politeness' is an important feature in language used to build and maintain relationships. Politeness norms could thus make an important contribution in incorporating culture material in a language course. Idioms and conversational gambits which are also used to facilitate interaction could be profitably included. Humour too, forms a very important part in interactive language, and humour also tends to be particularly culture specific. Therefore, humour evoked by socio-cultural expectations and satire and irony related to social norms are areas that are potentially interesting. Register variation and distinctions such as familiar/unfamiliar, formal/informal, official/personal and rhetorical/discourse conventions which also come within the framework, in being language used for maintaining social relationships could also be profitably incorporated. Cultural expectations and presuppositions would be yet another useful area.

In attempting to incorporate these culture specific aspects of language use in order to develop CA, it is necessary to work out the manner in which these different aspects are to be presented in class. Apart from the methodology that need to be applied (these will be discussed in the next section of this chapter) a framework for systematically incorporating these different aspects need to be worked out. Theoretically it would be possible to have a lesson unit which deals with sociolinguistic routines or a lesson unit which deals with idioms, but in practice this would not be effective in achieving the goal of improving sociolinguistic competence through CA and through actual use. A lesson unit which has nothing but conventional routines and information about routines would be as dull and uninteresting as a whole lesson devoted to the definite article or the model 'can'. Therefore, some other framework needs to be developed for incorporating cultural aspects of language use and cultural information about these aspects of use in lesson material. The framework adopted in the teaching materials developed on the basis of the theoretical constructs discussed at length in chapter 3 and in this chapter, and which will be discussed at length in chapter 5, is a thematic one.

Texts and discourse dealing with culture specific aspects of universal themes are selected on the basis of the working definition of culture discussed above. The activities and discussions centred round these texts are organized in order to illustrate sociolinguistic components such as conventionalized language forms, idioms, humour etc. discussed in the next subsections.

Cultural information underlying these socio-cultural aspects of language use are provided either through the texts themselves, and/or through the discussions and activities. Opportunities for the learners to identify sociolinguistic conventions of use and more importantly to use these in their own performance are provided in the lesson units.

The following sections will attempt to discuss in detail

1. Sociolinguistic Conventions (4.5.1 - 4.5.4)
2. General Cultural Information (4.5.5).

4.5.1. Routines, Rituals and Formulaic Conventions:

Routines, conversational formulae and conventionalized language forms, are related in a way that makes it difficult to pinpoint the differences between these types. Coulmas' definition of routine formulae as being 'highly conventionalized pre-patterned expressions whose occurrence is tied to more or less standardized communicative situations' (1981:2), seems to be an adequate definition for the purpose at hand. The type of routine to be found in telephone exchanges (Schegloff 1968), greeting exchanges (Sacks 1968), phatic communion (Malinowski 1923), routines performed at introductions (Laver 1981), in remedial interchanges (Owen 1983) and in compliments (Wolfson 1981, Manes and Wolfson 1981, Wolfson 1983, Manes 1983) are examples of routines. There are occasions when 'novel' utterances are not called for, and if used would not be acceptable, and in fact lead to misunderstanding (Manes and Wolfson 1981:126). As Schegloff points out, any attempt to open a telephone conversation in a novel way leads to a breakdown in communication (ibid.).

The fact that a breakdown in routine is noticed, discloses the importance of these routines in social interaction. Sacks gives an interesting example of this (1972:341). Secondly, the importance of such routines and formulae is seen in the conscious attempt made by adults to teach these to children. If one keeps track of all the routines that one uses during a day, the importance of these routines becomes even more evident. It is also a fact, that it is possible to get by using routines in many brief interactive situations. In Owen's corpus of apologies and remedial interchanges, the same ritualized language occurs across a wide variety of communicative situations involving different types of participants (op. cit.).

Routines and other conventionalized language forms seem to be linked with language schema just as meaning selection is schema related –i.e 'table' in a restaurant and 'table' in a classroom (schema theory in relation to language teaching will be discussed in 5.3). It seems possible to argue that culture specific ritualized language is instrumental in instantiating schemata. For example, of two people who walk up to a shop counter and begin to say respectively, 'Do you have...' and 'Could you tell me where ....', it is possible that the first is slotted on to category 'customer' and the 'second' on to category 'information seeker' and that these schemata are activated by the routines used.

Viewed from a language teaching point of view, routines and conversational formulae have many advantageous. It has been argued that children acquire a repertoire of verbal routines without conscious control of the form function relations (Bates 1976:292, quoted in Coulmas 1981). The fact that routines could more or less be 'pinned down' is also important. This however, does not mean that conversational routines and formulae can be taught by presenting to the learners an exhaustive list of these. This would not be useful, as it would not give the learner any control over these forms, as s/he would not know in what interactive situations it would be appropriate to use these.

This illustrates the important relationship between the sociolinguistic conventions of language use (ritualized language, routines and formulaic language use in this case) and CA. The most useful way of bringing this type of language to the learners' notice is by providing background information as to the type of interactive conditions that govern their use. By presenting examples of text and discourse in which this type of language occurs, it is possible to make learners aware of factors such as the following:

1. the type of participants among whom such language use is appropriate –e.g equals, those with higher social status etc.

2. Types of speech acts accomplished by using this type of ritualized language –e.g remedial interchanges, requests, promises etc.

3. Why the type of behaviour signalled by these conventions is called for –e.g to save face, to signal social distance, to build rapport and so on.

background information about the way in which relationships are regarded –i.e

parents and children, employer and employees, stranger and stranger etc., helps to explain these.

Though it is true that routines are easier to recognize than other conventionalized language forms, this does not imply that it is easy to teach these. What is suggested is that a routine is more easily recognized, whereas some of the other language forms are not so transparent. The concept of routines and formulaic expressions would be familiar to the learners as these features seem to be universal (Ferguson 1981:21). Tannen and Oztek describe many such expressions that occur in Turkish and Greek (1981:37-54) Ferguson in Syrian Arabic (1976:137-151) and Albert in Burundi (1972:81-104). They are also to be found in Sinhala (Disanayaka 1976, 1984). This makes it easier to introduce routines in class, as what the learners are called upon to do, is to recognize routines that exist in the SL and to learn the socio-cultural conditions under which these operate.

Coulmas points out that, routines apart from making the fullest use of cultural knowledge which comes to the members of a community, are also of vital importance to the foreign speaker, as even the mastery of basic routines allows the speaker to carry out strategies such as asking for repetition, clarification etc., with minimal effort and maximal effect (Coulmas 1981:9). In this sense, routines could have immediate benefits for learners, while at the same time contributing to the long term goal of CC.

Conversational gambits are not unrelated to routines and formulae, but tend to be different in that they are more flexible and do not necessarily occur in sequence. Keller describes conversational gambits as 'verbal signals', 'used to introduce level shifts within the conversation or to prepare listeners for the next turn in the logical argument' (Keller 1981:94). Gambits are just as indispensable, as routines and formulaic expressions, as it is almost impossible to carry out communication successfully without making use of these. It is also possible to stretch a point and say that these are not limited to conversational exchanges, as 'gambits' occur in writing too. In changing a subject, in moving from one point to another, in presenting illustrations in support of a point made previously, or in presenting another aspect of the argument, it is possible to recognize the use of 'pre-patterned expressions'. It is rarely that completely novel ways of doing these are employed in writing either.

Conversational gambits occur in turn taking, as expressions of social role marker, suggestive devices and state of consciousness signals (Keller 1981:93-113). Keller gives various sub-categories of gambits such as subject expression, opinions, argumentation etc. Both Keller's corpus, and that of Sorhus (1977 quoted in Coulmas 1981) reveal the widespread use of these gambits. Keller also draws attention to the importance of appropriateness in the use of gambits. He points out that it is the consideration of appropriateness which makes a speaker choose one form rather than another.

4.5.2. Politeness Norms:

Politeness norms are linked with all the conventional language forms discussed above. Brown and Levinson (1978:61), present politeness as being 'of a universal yet "social" sort'. This seems to be a very apt description of politeness norms, as they are universal as well as being heavily culture conditioned. The type of strategies used in making different types of requests, criticisms, offers, complaints, compliments etc. carry certain shared features, as outlined by Brown and Levinson (Ibid:62). Language that stresses in-group membership and social similarity and the language of formal politeness (the conventionalized indirect speech acts, hedges, apologies for intrusion etc., and the use of implicatures) are strategies available and in wide use in different languages. This makes politeness norms both an interesting and useful area to include in teaching socio-cultural awareness.

In introducing politeness norms, the emphasis should be on aspects such as situational appropriateness, social roles, intended illocutionary force etc., and what specifies these features. What is perfectly polite and acceptable in a particular situation, between certain individuals, may be totally unacceptable in other situations between other individuals. 'I wonder whether you could possibly pass the salt please?' uttered by a husband in speaking to his wife would not only be unnatural but inappropriate, as it signals social distance. A danger to guard against in teaching politeness norms, is making learners over-sensitive about politeness, which makes their speech and writing over-polite and therefore unnatural.

4.5.3. Idiomatic Expressions:

Related to the type of conventionalized forms of language discussed above, but different in certain aspects, are idiomatic expressions. The Chambers Twentieth Century dictionary defines 'idiom' as 'a mode of expression peculiar to a language: an expression characteristic of a particular language not logically or grammtically explicable'. Yorio prefaces his article on idioms and other conventionalized language forms with the following definition:

> 'An idiom is an expression whose meaning is more or less unpredictable from the sum of meaning of its morphemes. For example, the meaning of *red herring* is not the same as the sum of meaning of *red* plus the meaning of *herring* (1980:434).

He further goes on to discuss the relationship between formulae and idioms:

> '... Some routine formulas are also idiomatic. Euphemisms are typical cases of idiomatic routine formulas ('he passed on/away', 'I think I am going to be sick') (ibid:435).

Idiomatic expressions are derived from things and events to do with the natural background, historical and political occurrences, folk lore, myths, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom, traditions and so on, and 'usually contain a significant weight of cultural appropriateness' (Brooks 1969:320). According to the working definition of culture adopted in this thesis, idiomatic expressions are thus related to institutions, activities and the environment.

The use of idiomatic language is one area where 'the conditioned ability to visualize culturally appropriate images which language evokes' (Seelye 1977:252), becomes visible. Native speakers have difficulty in saying what idiomatic expressions they use, and are even likely to deny that they use any. However, listening to spontaneous conversation between two speakers reveal at least the use of two or three of these expressions. Some scholars warn against the use of idioms, colloquialisms and slang by SL learners, with good cause (Preston 1981:107). The misuse of these forms lead not only to breakdown in communication, but also to embarrassment.

Great caution should be exercised in including idiomatic expressions in a language syllabus. The worst possible way to set about teaching these expressions, is to inundate the learners with lengthy lists of idioms, compiled

out a dictionary of idioms. There is no point in burdening learners with expressions limited to books, as idiomatic expressions tend to be a dynamic area of language use and tend to grow and change. As far as possible, the expressions used in the teaching should be derived from contemporary speech and writing. More than the expressions themselves, what needs to be concentrated on, is the type of background, life style, feelings, beliefs, customs etc. that have given rise to these expressions. It is also necessary to caution learners against overuse.

4.5.4. Humour, Satire and Irony:

Speaking of slang and jokes, Condon and Yousef (1975:256) have this point to make:

> 'the most difficult experience in a language to comprehend and to express are commonly thought to be slang and jokes (and for special reasons songs). It is not coincidence that both slang and jokes are likely to be the most intimately bound to matters of cultural values and to reasoning and to rhetoric. To understand slang and local jokes is an excellent language test, for compressed into a few words are many of the cultures values and the ways of thinking that give life to language. We are saying that it is hard to 'know a language' without also knowing a great deal about the culture in which the language is spoken'.

Humour, satire and irony are to be found in all cultures, but like politeness, are expressed in different ways. One reason why ESL learners find it difficult to comprehend satire and humour in English, is the expression of these through word play, stress and tone variation. Unless a learner has a good command of grammar and vocabulary, and some sensitivity to speech rhythms, it is not easy to comprehend humour and irony. This is no reason why these should be carefully edited out of ESL materials. As Condon and Yousef rightly point out, these are rich sources of CA about expectations regarding social relationships, activities and institutions. It has been found that learners sometimes perceive an incident or action as humorous for totally different reasons than those perceived by the native speaker.

Humour, satire and irony are areas which could be successfully used to convey cultural information, that would lead to improved knowledge and ability to use the SL but in order to be useful, a lot of thought has to go into the selection of the right type of materials, and also to the right way of presenting

these in class. One of the great advantages of using this type of material is that if the learner is able to comprehend the nature of the material –that it is humorous– it arouses his/her interest and a desire to understand it more fully.

In this type of material, it is essential to do a lot of background work unobstrusively, so that a learner is in a sense prepared for what s/he encounters in a given text. This could be done through other class activities.

It is necessary to caution learners about the actual use of slang and jokes in their own speech as slang and colloquial speech sound 'unnatural' in the speech of most foreign speakers who have not reached the 'ambilingual point' in Kachru's cline (1965:391). The purpose of using such material is not to teach learners to load their speech with slang and jokes, but to be receptive to such things, as it leads to a better understanding of how the language operates.

4.5.5. Overt Information about the Second Language Culture:

Apart from the information about the SL culture conveyed in relation to sociolinguistic conventions, it is possible to include overt cultural material which demonstrates the link between culture and language. Culture specific information about types of individuals –i.e stock brokers, coal miners, oil rig workers etc., institutions –i.e marriage, school, family etc., activities –i.e football, camping, birdwatching and the natural environment –i.e the seasonal cycle, plant life and so on which highlight differences between the learners' culture and the SL culture could be incorporated in the teaching material. The way in which these culture specific features are reflected in the language –in its lexicon, in its idiom, in the content of its social exchanges– would help EFL/ESL learners to understand some of the unique ways in which the SL/FL differs from their own MT. In addition, SL cultural information about social roles, institutions, activities and so on would contribute to the patterened generation of schemata in the SL. This new information would help in modifying the learners' MT schemata to accommodate related yet different sub-schemata that would enable the learners to process information in the SL with greater ease. The information could be arranged according to the different constituents of culture defined here –i.e individuals, relationships etc., or according to universal themes or according to any other order.

Apart form conveying CA, this material could be used for language activities

that would promote language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The texts and discourse used for conveying this information could also be helpful in bringing into focus the sociolinguistic conventions occurring in these and for providing opportunities for using these conventions in the learners own performance. This would, hopefully contribute not only to an increased knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions, but also to better ability to use this knowledge in interaction and communication.

The most important thing to bear in mind in presenting overt information about the SL/FL culture, is the need to make sure the material is useful in demonstrating the relationship between culture and language; that it helps to demonstrate the impact of the culture on the development and use of the language. It is not possible to find material that illustrate these links all the time, but it would be possible to organize material in a way that the relationship between language and its cultural background could be demonstrated.

Another important point is to make sure that the material is of the sort that would draw the learners' attention. Though the level of difficulty is certainly a factor that need to be considered depending on the type of learner, it is unwise to reject everything that seems to be uncommon and out of the ordinary. In relation to the use of literary materials for language teaching, Widdowson poses an interesting question:

> '....the idea that somehow we've got to be practical, ordinary, commonplace, that the language we teach has got to be associated with normality; seems to me to be mistaken... why should the kind of conventional, humdrum, normal routine life to be reckoned to be more stimulating for language teaching than anything else?' (1983:33).

It would be unwise to burden learners with material that is difficult both because of structure and content. It is necessary to strike a balance between the level of difficulty and the 'surprise value' of the material in order to secure both interest and learning.

The third important point to consider in including overt cultural information, is the need to make sure that there is sufficient variety. Concentrating on too much information of a similar sort could lead to boredom. Rivers (1972:4) discusses the importance of variety in material and techniques in language

teaching. It is useful to select material which helps to discuss similarities and differences with the learners' MT.

4.5.6. Literary Materials:

In teaching CA, the literature of the SL can be an invaluable aid. Though literature in relation to language teaching has fallen into disfavour and disuse, some linguists and educationists have continued to express their faith in the usefulness of literary material. In the present time there seems to be a resurgence of interest in using literature for language teaching. Widdowson is in the forefront among those who advocate the use of literature (Widdowson 1983:30–35, 1984:160–173). His arguments against the theory that literature is unsuitable for ESL/EFL because of the unfamiliarity of the content and the style, are supported by an English teacher in the Middle East, who feels that the unfamiliar may be helpful because of its ability to arouse curiosity:

> '...maybe if we allow a far greater foreign culture input, the opportunities for arousing curiosity and enriching the imagination in fact increases learning and far outweighs the disadvantages' (English Worldwide 2,2, June 1982:161).

Among those who advocate the use of literature for language teaching are: Murdock (1961), Allen (1964), Nostrand (1966), Wright (1968) and more recently, Muto (1979), Marshall (1979), Di Pietro (1981), McKay (1982), Ramasaran (1983), McConochie (1981, 1985), Spack (1985) and Tomlinson (1986).

It is also argued that literature is 'irrelevant ' to language teaching. This leads Bradley to state:

> 'that for the majority of students, even at the late school level, it is not the English of the literary masterpieces that they need to cope with –it is the English of science and technology the textbook English of subjects like geography and economics, the English of job advertisements, job specification, forms, time tables, brochures etc' (Bradley 1981:5).

This is an echo of the views expressed by Topping at an earlier date (Topping 1968).

Apart from pointing out the flaws in the argument that what is unfamiliar is necessarily unsuitable for language teaching, Widdowson suggests many ways

in which literature could be regarded as being relevant. He points out that in the absence of conventional schemata, the reader of literature is unable to anticipate; to take short cuts, but has to make use of interpretative procedures to make sense. He also posits the writer of literature and the reader as being in the 'problem solving business', and he goes on to say that, 'because there is no right solution, such activities provide plenty of scope for discussion' (1983:31-32). Widdowson also points out that text book writers who have dismissed literature as being unsuitable have replaced it with a poor substitute.

> 'Having got rid of literature, material writers proceed to invent their own. Text books are full of fiction' (1984:162).

He goes on to illustrate the shortcomings of this 'fiction' as an alternative:

> 'Unlike literature... pedagogic presentations of this sort does not realize the meaning potential of language to create alternative contexts of reality; it simply manifests language usages, puts it on show disposed in a way that makes minimal demands on thought. So, learners are not supposed to engage with what is present at the level of language use at all' (ibid:169).

It is not suggested that, only literature or mainly literature should be used in ESL/EFL. What is indicated is the potential value of literature as a resource for ESL/EFL teaching.

4.5.7. Justification for Using the Proposed Sociolinguistic Areas:

An attempt was made in this section to outline areas that could be profitably incorporated into ESL/EFL courses in order to increase CA and improve the ability to use sociolinguistic conventions. There are many more areas and perhaps better ones. Those that are presented are important for the following reasons:

1. areas such as conventionalized language forms, routines, humour and literature are sufficiently distinctive as part of the socio-cultural features of the English language.
2. They have parallels in the learners' MT and therefore provide opportunities for discussion.
3. They are not self-contained units but are linked to various

aspects that could come into a discussion. Therefore, these areas are capable of expansion as the discussion progresses.

4. teacher experience has shown that these are useful areas to concentrate on in language teaching.

Methods of introducing these materials in class will be discussed in the following section.

4.6. Methods and Techniques for Introducing Culture Material in the Classroom

In deciding on the type of teaching methodology that could be profitably employed in a teaching course which has as its goal the development of sociolinguistic competence through CA, the manner in which learners are expected to absorb knowledge and develop automaticity and fluency need to be considered. As discussed in 4.3.2.3, in the case of ESL learners such as the learners in Sri Lanka, the lack of opportunity for acquiring sociolinguistic competence outside the classroom makes conscious teaching of sociolinguistic aspects of language use imperative. As also pointed out in 4.3.2.3, this does not mean that the teaching programme should only be limited to promoting conscious learning. Unconscious learning would also take place at the same time. Thus, the methodology that is selected should aid both these processes. In attempting to improve CC, the ultimate goal of the teaching programme is not only the improvement of language knowledge but also the ability to use this knowledge in the learners' own performance. Thus, the methodology should aid not only the acquisition of knowledge but also enhance the possibility of achieving automaticity and fluency in using this knowledge. The methodology developed for communicative language teaching would be particularly pertinent in achieving this goal because of the emphasis on classroom activity and discussion in which opportunities for use are provided.

Most of the teaching techniques discussed below provide opportunities for conscious presentation of culture material. For example, stories, newspaper articles, statistical charts etc. could contain culture specific information. Similarly, cartoons and pictures etc. could have embedded in them cultural information which could be brought to the notice of the learners consciously. At the same time, these would illustrate sociolinguistic conventions -e.g cultural pre-suppositions, routines, idioms, etc.- that could be brought to the learners' notice consciously. Cultural translation and the study and discussion

of literary texts discussed below are two techniques that specifically provide opportunities for such presentation. However, both cases involve not only comprehension but also production on the part of the learners, thus bringing in all four skills -reading, writing, listening and speech- into the activity. These techniques would therefore, hopefully, facilitate the acquisition of conscious knowledge, the assimilation of unconscious knowledge, practice which would contribute to the improvement of procedural ability in the use of both linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and automaticity and fluency in language use.

Many 'traditional' methods such as underlining, cloze and dictation and standard teaching methods such as multiple choice and open-ended questions can be profitably used for consciousness-raising. Though 'drills' too provide practice and therefore could be regarded as a means of cultivating procedural ability through practice, this technique is not advocated in teaching for CC, because of its mechanical quality, its lack of creativity and because more interest provoking methods can be found for fulfilling this purpose.

In selecting methodology therefore, the primary considerations can be summarized as follows: the methodology should facilitate

1. the conscious presentation of cultural materials
2. the conscious learning of cultural information
3. unconscious assimilation of cultural information
4. conscious and unconscious learning of sociolinguistic conventions
5. the improvement of procedural ability to use sociolinguistic conventions in learner performance
6. overall improvement in the ability to use linguistic knowledge.

Techniques suggested by ESL/EFL teachers for teaching composition skills, listening skills etc. could be used for teaching CA. For example, the strip story technique suggested by Gibson (1970) for teaching grammar and pronunciation could also be used for providing cultural information and the opportunities to employ sociolinguistic conventions of use in the classroom. In the same way the use of things such as magazine advertisements (Sandsbury 1969), statistical

charts (Plaister 1974), telephone directories (Allen 1971, Crather 1971), jokes (Trachtenburg 1979), folk tales (Horn 1974), puns and games (Monnot and Kite 1974), newspapers (William 1973, Lee 1973), cartoons (Fowles 1979), radio commercials (Hafernik and Surguine 1979), problem columns in newspapers (Hall 1971), lectures and films (Gex 1971) and songs (Kellerman (1981) which have been found useful in the ESL/EFL classroom can be adopted for teaching CA and for developing activities not only to improve their linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, but also develop their ability to use this knowledge in their own performance. Techniques such as cultural translation (Pincas 1963) and the study and discussion of cultural overtones of literary texts (Brooks 1966) have been specifically suggested for building CA. Some of these techniques will be discussed at length in the next subsections.

4.6.1. Cultural Translation:

There is little evidence in the literature that cultural translation suggested by Pincas (1963:15-20), has been taken up. This is not surprising as 'translation' has come to be regarded as an unsuccessful 'traditional' method. However, what Pincas suggests is very different from what is understood by translation in the ordinary sense. Pincas outlines the cultural translation process in two stages. At the first stage, the class looks for cultural items in a passage chosen by the teacher, where, 'the skill in identifying a culture item as such is the basis of the exercise' (Ibid:22). The learners then consider these in relation to their own culture. Is it different? How is it different? etc. The second stage, involves the culture translation itself. To quote Pincas:

> 'This is the rewriting of the chosen passage (in English) to conform to the native culture of the students. It is a most searching exercise, since it forces awareness of even the apparently trivial details of similarity or differences between cultures. Often it will be found that an item in the native culture cannot be adequately expressed in English. This discovery alone is of tremendous educational value' (Ibid:22).

Pincas does not emphasize the need for discussion of these similarities and differences in the classroom, but this seems a profitable extension of the activity. Learners are often of the opinion that what makes understanding a TL text difficult is the lack of vocabulary. They are under the misconception that all that is needed to use a language is a massive vocabulary. The best evidence for this assumption is, the meticulous care with which each new word

that is uttered by the teacher is written down for future reference. The type of activity outlined by Pincas would among other things make the learners aware that it is not so much the words but the meanings that have to be learnt.

With careful selection of appropriate texts, this technique could be successfully used to cultivate the learners' awareness of conventionalized language forms, culture specific beliefs and so on.

4.6.2. Study and Discussion of Literary Texts Selected Because of their Obvious and Sometimes Subtle Cultural Overtones:

The above suggested by Brooks (1969:320-323), is related to culture translation discussed earlier. The main difference is that Brooks especially thinks in terms of literary passages.

Brooks outlines the possible cultural elements that could be identified and discussed in literary texts: formulae of politeness, use of titles and personal pronouns of direct address, using the telephone, beginning and ending letters, the expression of emotion, attitude towards the clergy, signs of mourning and so on. This sort of list could be expanded exhaustively. What is of pedagogical interest, is the fact that literary texts -prose, poems, plays- could be used not merely for content comprehension but for teaching CA and for discourse construction activities in which this cultural knowledge is used for negotiating meaning which would enhance procedural ability and further knowledge gain. In taking this approach, the teacher indicates to the learners, a different way of looking at a text and in doing so to see a different sort of meaning.

4.6.3. Use of Features from the Target Culture which Depict Cultural Patterns:

In conveying overt cultural information, any institution, custom, event, etc. from the SL/FL culture could be made use of and language activities devised round these. For example, meals and mealtimes could be used to pinpoint differences in eating habits and specific cultural meanings associated with vocabulary denoting mealtimes (Burling 1979:34-36, Pearce 1979:62).

This could also be done by using a variety of items that present a cultural picture. Some of the suggestions made by ESL/EFL teachers were mentioned earlier (4.5). Apart from these, there are other objects, such as postage

stamps, picture postcards, photographs, posters, mail order catalogues etc. that could be similarly used. What is used in a particular class will depend on what is available and what is appropriate to a particular group of learners. What is attempted here is to outline what could be used and to present information available in the literature about successful ways in which these have been used by other teachers.

4.6.3.1. Newspapers:

Of the material outlined above, newspapers are more readily available than some of the other material. Since reading newspapers is considered an adult activity, it is specially useful with adult learners. There is a variety to choose from within a newspaper and it could be used in various ways. For example, the learners' attention maybe drawn to headlines, to advertisements, to notices, to news reports, sports commentaries, weather forecasts, cultural events and so on. Advertisements in a SL newspaper, could be used together with those in a local English newspaper. If the teacher has access to SL/FL newspapers, it would be possible to compile a set of articles dealing with a particular event/incident, where each learner could be asked to examine one article, in preparation for a class discussion. During the discussion, it would be possible to draw the learners' attention to 'incidental' cultural details that are revealed in the articles and which affect both the meaning and use of the language that occur in them. This sort of activity would require a certain amount of interest and dedication on the part of the teacher, as it requires thought and preparation before hand.

4.6.3.2. Cartoons:

Though these are more difficult to use than newspapers as they need more cultural explanation, cartoons as suggested by Fowles (1979:155-159), are useful because they are more enjoyable. There is also the advantage of having the information depicted in a visual form. At the early stages, it is better to use cartoons without captions or dialogues, and organize classroom activities in a way that allows learners to absorb the 'information' that is present visually, and to create discourse of their own making use of this knowledge.

Cartoons are suitable for group activity and discussion. Having different groups discuss and arrive at a solution concerning a particularly enigmatic cartoon, can be quite stimulating. A wealth of socio-cultural knowledge can be

thus acquired while at the same time providing ample opportunity for the learners to make use of the knowledge they already possess, in questioning, suggesting, comparing ideas and so on. This activity could be varied by getting learners to match captions and cartoons, to write their own captions and so on. In order to get the discussion progressing in a CA direction, it would be necessary to draw attention to the type of people and objects depicted in the cartoon and the content of their speech. Every attempt should be made to help the learners to 'see' the humour for themselves. Through cartoons, it would be possible to teach the expectations, phobias, stereotypes etc. of a particular culture and the way in which these thoughts and activities of the culture are reflected in the language of the cartoons.

Joke telling (Trachtenberg 1979:89–99), could be used in a similar way. Once again, it is the contrast between the expected and the unexpected that has to be brought to the learners' attention and the way in which the 'expected', both from a linguistic and content point of view is linked with the culture. It is useful to discuss the way in which some jokes are solely dependent on the meaning of a particular word for its humour. In the case of such jokes, it is necessary to make the learners receptive through other activities, so that they are able to respond to the humour without being hampered by not knowing the word meaning.

4.6.3.3. Folk tales and Stories:

Folk tales and stories are another important area that offers much scope for CA related activities. Horn (1974:37–42) discusses the possibilities of folk tales in relation to the Ananse Tales for teaching composition. Folk tales could also facilitate various other activities and contribute to the development of skills other than composition. As Horn rightly points out, folk tales would be invaluable for drawing the learners' attention to the composition structure. From a CA perspective, they would also demonstrate the culture specificity of this structure and how this helps or hinders understanding. The similarities and the differences that exist between folk tales of one culture and another is an important source for classroom discussion. Often, the plots of the stories are archetypal and it is the cultural 'trimmings' that make folk tales of each culture unique. This serves both to aid understanding and to pinpoint cultural differences. Apart from details from daily life, folk tales and myths also indicate what values are upheld by a particular society, what is frowned upon,

what is played down and so on. For group activities, it is possible to get learners to suggest beginnings, endings and titles for stories, thus manouvering classroom activity in a direction which would enable learners to apply the knowledge they already possess and the knowledge newly gained in actual discourse situations.

4.6.4. The Strip Story:

This technique which is an adaptation of the scrambled sentence device, is an useful way in which different types of stories can be put use in class. As Gibson (1975:149-154) suggests, it should lead to spontaneous communicative activity because there is no other way in which the learners could solve the problem. The story is written and cut up into strips, with one sentence to a strip. Each learner gets a strip and has to memorize the sentence in it. The strips are then collected by the teacher, and the learners have to put the story together by getting information from each other. Though Gibson stresses only the usefulness of this method for teaching grammar and pronunciation, it could also be useful for using stories for teaching CA by selecting stories that convey cultural information and which illustrate culture specific features of story narration and which also perhaps incorporate sociolinguistic conventions of language use.

4.6.5. Use of Radio and Tapes:

Listening activities are a good way of building CA. The most readily available source is the radio, but if facilities are available, it is possible to make use of tapes which the teacher himself/herself could prepare. Interesting talks, news reports and other programmes could be selected and taped for classroom use. The learners should be taught to listen to cultural meaning in addition to referential meaning and to culture specific discourse conventions. Opportunities to listen to talks/lectures by speakers from the SL/FL culture and opportunities to see films and television programmes would also be useful.

4.6.6. Other Methods:

Though teaching for CC is not the same as 'Communicative Language Teaching' (CLT, discussed in 3.5), there are important areas in CLT which could be profitably employed in the teaching methodology of a CC based approach. Three of these areas are:

1. the emphasis on discourse and communication activities
2. variety in relation to classroom activities
3. the learning centred co-operative approach

CLT stresses the importance of the learner and of learning instead on concentrating entirely on the teaching. This outlook would prove very useful in a teaching course designed to achieve CC through CA and sociolinguistic competence. The success of this type of course would depend very much on the co-operation of the learner. Therefore, getting learners actively involved in the business of learning would be very helpful. This would depend partly on convincing the learners that,

1. whatever the teacher may say or do, what s/he learns and how s/he learns it depends ultimately on himself/herself.
2. That s/he is not helpless and is able to do a great deal for herself/himself and also for fellow learners.

It also depends on making available to the learners, the opportunities to prove themselves.

In providing these opportunities and in handing over part of the responsibility of making the classroom activities successful to the learners, discussion and communication activities highlighted in CLT would be very useful. Discussion and other communication activities force the learners to actually *do* things with language and especially to make the first move instead of following meekly. Since sociolinguistic competence especially depends largely on use, both in relation to knowledge and the ability to use, this emphasis on discussion and communication activities would prove particularly useful.

The importance of variety in culture teaching has already been mentioned (4.4), therefore, the variety in the classroom advocated by CLT is once again relevant to a CC oriented language course. Apart from providing the opportunity for presenting the rich variety available in the way of culture material, variety in the classroom would be helpful in sustaining learner interest in the activities going on in the classroom. Variety in technique would be equally important as variety in content. There are techniques other than those

discussed in detail here that could be employed. Encouraging learners to write to penfriends is another useful method that could be employed. In a country such as Sri Lanka, most students would not be able to do this because of financial reasons; but even in such cases, it would be possible to encourage one or two learners to write to penfriends and share the cultural information both content and language specific –i.e features of informal letter writing– that they gain, with the rest of the class.

It is also possible to use simple crosswords, puzzles and games. These could be made use of for achieving different things such as highlighting culture specific vocabulary, drawing attention to and practising speech acts, providing opportunities to use a recently acquired sociolinguistic convention and so on. Puzzles and games are particularly helpful as they are genuine interactive activities and allow language practice without resorting to drills. They also provide much needed variety. This type of activity goes down well, especially during the last 15–20 minutes of the last English class of the week.

The type of techniques suitable for a particular class will depend on such factors as the type of learner, the resources available, the time available and so on. As McLeod points out, what is important is to realize that the teaching of culture can be integrated with all aspects of language teaching (McLeod 1976:211–220). The success of any of these techniques is largely dependent on the enthusiasm and the interest of the teacher, and the co-operation of the learners.

In order to make CA in the ESL/EFL class a success,

> 'The applied linguist who is also interested in the relation between language and culture, will need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach and an open mind' (Alexander 1982:8).

The inclusion of a CA component in an ESL syllabus is justified because of the benefits to be gained in contributing to the proper understanding and the ability to use the language appropriately. In addition, it would also contribute

to better cross-cultural understanding among people of different cultures. For,

> 'in the best of times knowledge of another culture is tantamount to moving away from a dark, dank corner of the cave into more illumination, understanding other cultures is frequently a matter of life and death' (Seelye 1977:252).

CHAPTER 5

THE TEACHING MATERIALS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and evaluate the teaching materials which were constructed incorporating the theoretical constructs and teaching methodology described in chapter 4. These materials were used in an experiment which set out to investigate the relationship between CA and CC. This experiment will be described in detail in chapter 6. This chapter attempts to demonstrate the way in which the concept of CA is applied in the teaching materials that were constructed and used in the experiment (5.2). In section 5.3, the teaching materials are evaluated in the light of the research findings and in the light of relevant research in the areas of schema theory, pragmatics and discourse analysis. In 5.4, revisions suggested for improving the materials are discussed. Finally in 5.5, three sample units revised taking into account these research findings and the newer theories are presented and discussed.

5.2. The Application of the Concept of CA in the Teaching Materials

In developing teaching materials applying the theoretical constructs discussed in detail in chapters 3 and 4 and the teaching methodology examined in chapter 4, what is attempted is the bringing together of two different concepts that may contribute to the improvement of CC. These are:

1. Improving sociolinguistic knowledge
2. Providing opportunities for using this knowledge in actual use situations

Therefore, the teaching materials are designed to develop the learners' sociolinguistic knowledge both consciously and unconsciously by linking this knowledge with underlying cultural awareness, through directly presenting to the learner examples of sociolinguistic conventions and encouraging unconscious assimilation through exposure to these conventions. It is not sufficient to limit the aim of the teaching materials merely to conveying sociolinguistic knowledge. In the case of these learners who do not get much opportunity to use this knowledge in the wider society while they continue to be students, it is also important to provide opportunities for using this

knowledge meaningfully in classroom interaction. It is necessary for these learners not only to learn sociolinguistic conventions and how to use them, but it is also necessary for them to cultivate automaticity and fluency in them. Just as in the case of linguistic knowledge, in the case of sociolinguistic knowledge too, this could be brought about by improving processing ability through practice. Teachers using 'traditional' methods have always given a great deal of attention to practice and rehearsal. Though regimented techniques such as pattern drills used for achieving this end are not necessarily the best, the principle is sound as researchers have been discovering lately. McLaughlin, Rossman and McLeod point out that,

> 'In recent years researchers have investigated the effects of practice, rehearsal and familiarity on information processing. A particularly important variable appears to be the degree of attention involved. The more attention required, the more resources are consumed and the slower the processing. Greater practice, rehearsal and familiarity with the material allows information to be handled more routinely without as much cost in the attentional monitoring as when there is less practice, rehearsal or familiarity with the material' (1983:138).

In these materials, an attempt was made to achieve this aim, not by the use of pattern drills or even by getting learners to practice consciously but through activities and more importantly through discussions where the learners were manouvered into using -and therefore practising- formulaic language, indirect speech, routines, idioms etc. in asking for information, accepting/rejecting suggestions/ideas, arguing for/against something, planning speech/narration, turntaking in offering information/suggestions and so on.

The importance of underlying cultural knowledge in using and processing sociolinguistic knowledge in interaction and communication was discussed in chapter 4, and arguments as to why increased CA would lead to improved CC were also discussed. In developing teaching materials with this end in view, a framework for bringing CA and sociolinguistic conventions together in a complementary way had to be devised. This framework is discussed in 5.2.1 below.

5.2.1. The Framework for the Teaching Materials:

As discussed in 4.5 above, though it is possible to construct a lesson unit devoted to idiomatic usage or to formulaic language or any other aspect of sociolinguistic knowledge, this type of lesson unit would be no more interest provoking than a lesson unit devoted to a particular grammatical structure. On the the other hand, the hypothesis examined in this thesis is the proposition that the improvement of CA underlying sociolinguistic conventions would lead to the improvement in the knowledge of these conventions. Therefore, a framework which would allow the introduction of information about cultural aspects that underlie the use of English and at the same time would also have scope for presenting examples of sociolinguistic conventions related to these had to be worked out. A thematic framework was considered as being the most suitable for this purpose for the following reasons. In choosing a thematic framework, it is possible to think in terms of universal themes which manifest themselves in culture specific ways in different cultures. The immediate advantage of this is the possibility for comparison and contrast with the learners' own culture. In addition, it is also possible to draw the learners' attention to the way in which sociolinguistic conventions which embody knowledge of these culture specific aspects could be studied in comparison with the learners' MT conventions. This culture specific information reflected in sociolinguistic conventions and examples of such conventions as they occur in texts and discourse could be presented in a complementary manner through a thematic framework.

5.2.1.1. The Thematic Structure:

Thirteen universal themes which were also substantially culture specific were selected as the themes on which the units were to be developed. These themes illustrated one or more of the aspects of the working definition of culture described in 4.3. These themes (which will be outlined in 5.2.3 below) were considered suitable for the following reasons:

1. Being universal and culture specific at the same time, these themes allow a wide spectrum of cultural information to be incorporated into the materials

2. They could be considered as having potential for demonstrating a wide variety of sociolinguistic conventions

3. Not being remote from the learners' experience, these

themes could be considered as being likely to provide the element of familiarity that helps understanding, while at the same time containing sufficient new information in the form of culture specific content to prevent boredom and to sustain interest

4. They could be regarded as being themes likely to be interesting to mature adult learners

5. The availability of interesting texts dealing with these themes which also showed promise of being exploitable for teaching sociolinguistic conventions.

The texts and the resulting discourse were meant to illustrate these culture specific aspects of the universal themes and at the same time provide opportunities to present examples of sociolinguistic conventions conditioned by awareness of cultural knowledge. In selecting these cultural themes and in presenting examples of sociolinguistic conventions, no assumption was made that these give a full picture of either CA or of sociolinguistic conventions. Nothing more than presenting a sample of CA and sociolinguistic conventions was attempted.

5.2.1.2. The Texts Used in the Teaching Materials:

After deciding on the themes which were to form the framework of the teaching materials, a corpus of texts of various types -prose, poems, charts, maps, transcripts etc.- from various sources - books, journals, newspapers, language textbooks, anthologies etc.- were gathered together. Next, the texts that were considered as being most suitable for developing CA and for providing examples of sociolinguistic conventions linked to this CA were selected through a process of elimination. Texts which were regarded as being either linguistically or content-wise too difficult were discarded. The researcher had to depend on her experience of having worked with Sri Lankan ESL students at the proficiency level of the potential experimental group (level 4), for this purpose. Texts considered as being too long were also discarded. Similarly, texts which were written in archaic language were left out. Texts which were considered as not being sufficiently culture specific in relation to the theme were likewise omitted. The remainder of the corpus consisting of prose extracts, stories, poems, transcripts, charts etc. were used in constructing the materials.

The texts used in the teaching materials roughly fell into the five aspects of

the working definition of culture outlined in 4.3 -individiuals, relationships, institutions, activities and the physical realities surrounding these. They provided culture specific information about attitudes, behaviour, thought patterns, cultural assumptions, cultural stereotypes etc. They were meant to illustrate the way in which individuals, relationships between them, the institutions that bind them together, the activities they take part in and the physical environment in which this drama is staged are reflected in and nurtured by the language associated with these. Expectations of the culture in the matter of relationships between individuals are directly related to politeness norms, formulaic speech, pre-fabricated patterns and so on. The availability or non-availability of linguistic means for the expression of certain concepts illustrates the way in which the outlook of the culture has conditioned the language. For example, the inseparable way in which the concepts of 'privacy' and 'individuality' condition English is revealed in the heavy use of modality and indirect speech in English. These cultural expectations were intended to be brought to the learners' notice by providing information about the way individuals and their actions are regarded by themselves and by others -e.g units 1, 2, 5 & 7. The relationship of the concepts of privacy and individuality to particular sociolinguistic conventions of politeness were introduced in units 1, 5, 11 & 14. The way in which cultural assumptions are manifested in idiomatic usage is illustrated by most of the texts and this was meant to be brought to the notice of the learners through activities such as identifying idiomatic expressions and discussing these in relation to the text, to culture specific features -e.g the bird idioms in unit 8- and in relation to the learners' culture and the MT. Texts in units 1, 2 3, 5, 6 & 8 illustrated culture specific aspects of humour and the way in which CA becomes necessary both for the understanding and appreciation of it. For instance, the way in which cartoon humour depends on awareness of cultural stereotypes is illustrated in units 1 & 2. This feature was meant to be brought to the learners' notice by consciously drawing their attention to it and also by discussing the concept in relation to stereotypes in the learners' culture.

The texts also embody features of different types of register and discourse and rhetorical organization. Cultural assumptions underlying these were meant to be highlighted through activities and discussion. For example, the text called *The Travel Bug* in unit 2 makes use of features of a different register -medical jargon- for creating a humorous effect. The writer relies on a

layman's awareness of medical/scientific jargon for achieving a humorous effect. Features of the indigenous medicine register -for instance the standard recipe for ayuruvedic decoctions- is often used in a similar way in Sinhala. Learner awareness in this case was hoped to be achieved through comparison and contrast. The culture specificity of the rhetorical organization of narratives, folk tales and legends etc. and the reader expectations conditioned by this specificity is illustrated in the texts used in several units -e.g units 2, 5, 6 & 8. These texts were intended to facilitate the introduction of culture specific story structure and the way in which understanding and appreciation of these are dependent on being able to understand story conventions of the culture.

The culture specific information and examples of sociolinguistic conventions found in the texts used in the lesson material were not viewed by any means as a static information load to be transferred to the learner. These are merely cogs in the developmental process. Far more information and examples of sociolinguistic conventions were meant to be generated through these texts. This process was facilitated through activities which formed a very important part of the teaching materials. These will be discussed in detail in the next subsection.

5.2.1.3. Activities Incorporated in the Teaching Materials:

The activities organized around the various texts in the units had a central role in achieving the CA goal as well as contributing to the ultimate CC goal by providing opportunities for exposure and use, input and unconscious assimilation and for automaticity and fluency through practice, not only of sociolinguistic knowledge but also of the learners' linguistic knowledge. The activities were of various types: group discussion, organization of narratives/stories for presentation in class, note taking, questionnaire design, collective writing, finding out information from maps/charts etc. Most of these activities involved face to face interaction with members of the learners' group/class and with the teacher, thus providing many opportunities for using formulaic language, routines, pre-fabricated patterns, discourse conventions and so on. At the same time, in preparing materials for presenting to the class and in writing letters, stories etc. there were opportunities for practising rhetorical conventions.

It is not suggested that it is possible to get learners to use and therefore

practise sociolinguistic conventions, rhetorical/discourse conventions etc. simply by getting them to talk to each other or to write something. A great deal of subtle manouvering is necessary to achieve this. Since the type of sociolinguistic conventions that could be used and the amount of practice through use that is possible in a given session is dependent on the way in which the discussion or any other activity progresses, it is not possible to set down in detail the way in which this is to be achieved. The teacher notes given in appendix 3.2 set out guidelines for conducting activities, but the type of conventions that the learners could be encouraged to use and the amount of practice that need to be provided are situation dependent. The teacher was meant to be on the alert for making use of all opportunities that came up for guiding the learners towards practising sociolinguistic conventions in taking part in the activities. This was meant to be done by hints, suggestions, prompts and by drawing attention to sociolinguistic conventions that the learners had come across in previous sessions and by the teacher's own use of these conventions.

Since the aim of the teaching materials was to promote sociolinguistic competence and because sociolinguistic conventions cannot be inculcated in the same way as grammatical rules, activities that were merely practice exercises were not considered appropriate. For this reason, no 'drills' of any kind were included among the activities. Activities in which learners had to do repetition or drills merely for the purpose of practising a rule or vocabulary item or dialogue were regarded as inappropriate. Activities were considered as justified only if they were logically related to some other activity that went before and could be linked to something that followed. For example, the learners were required to make notes of a text they were reading in relation to a theme that had been introduced earlier (e.g unit 1, part 2). The purpose of note taking was usually to enable learners to narrate a story/describe an incident etc. to another group/to the rest of the class who did not know the story/did not know the incident/were unfamiliar with the text etc. Sociolinguistic conventions being what they are, it was felt that these could be profitably learnt only through being introduced to them in relation to actual use contexts. Therefore, every attempt was made to provide real use contexts through the activities as far as this is possible in a classroom setting. It was hoped that apart from providing exposure and practice, activities that made 'real use' of language possible would also be of psychological benefit to the

learners in strenghtening their confidence in their ability to use the SL in interactive communicative situations. Learners regard classroom 'exercises' as being unrelated to real language use. This was another reason for carefully avoiding activities that could be construed as being 'just exercises'.

Role play was not considered appropriate because role play is also regarded as an 'exercise' by learners. Unlike puzzles and games which are not 'serious' learning activities but are nevertheless regarded as 'real', role play is not regarded as being real in the same way. Asking learners to imagine themselves as somebody else and to imagine themselves in fictitious situations, also has the effect of divorcing the classroom from reality. The learners were not asked to think that they were anything other than what they were: university undergraduates. When hypothetical situations were used, they were asked to be observers or analysts (e.g unit 1, part 1) or to make reasoned judgements (unit 5, part 1). When they were asked to make reasoned judgements about the type of language used in hypothetical situations outside the classroom -e.g unit 1, part 1 asking the time from a stranger, looking for a book in the library, these were situations that the learners were familiar with and are therefore real to them.

5.2.1.4. Teaching Methodology:

Teaching methodology that could be regarded as being particularly suited for introducing culture material was discussed in 4.6. These methods were regarded as being especially suitable because they provide scope for activities of the type discussed earlier that enable the introduction and practice of sociolinguistic conventions. Of the teaching techniques discussed in 4.6, many were applied in the teaching materials constructed for the experiment described in chapter 6. Underlining and circling or similar MC type techniques were advocated to facilitate meaning construction. This method was used to sensitize learners to culture specific meaning, idioms and schematic meaning. Underlining and circling were used as a means of spotlighting focal aspects and for isolating important bits of information. This method was employed in most of the units -e.g units 2, 3, 9, 10. It was used in most of the units to bring idioms and culturally loaded lexical items to the learners' notice. The process of familiarization was activated by getting the learners to discuss the meanings, find alternatives and so on as part of group work. This method was also used to make learners consciously aware of sociolinguistic conventions

such as politeness formulae, routines etc. -e.g units 1 & 5.

Open ended questions were used for introducing topics for discussion in groups. This was intended to stimulate creative thinking and give the learners the opportunity for unrestricted speech and if they so desired, to change the direction in which the lesson was progressing. This technique was used in most of the units (see table 5.1 for a summary of the methods and the units that employ them).

The main purpose of having discussions was to encourage learners to use what linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge they had and to overcome their inhibitions about the SL in this way. Discussion was envisaged as a means of conveying cultural information through a two way process in which the texts and the teacher convey part of the information, the learners contribute part of it and new information is assimilated in relation to known information. The discussions were also meant to introduce the sociolinguistic conventions involved in turntaking, interrupting disagreeing and so on and to encourage the use of chunks, pre-fabricated patterns etc. This was intended to be achieved partly by the teacher providing a model in her own speech in addressing the learners. In addition, when the teacher joined in the group discussions, she was meant to guide learners towards using these conventions, by the use of prompts, subtle hints, unobstrusive paraphrasing of what the learner is trying to say in a more appropriate manner and so on. However, the teacher was meant to keep a low profile and not make conventions introduced in the form of prompts or paraphrases sound like 'corrections', in order to prevent learners from feeling inhibited about using the SL.

The standard MC method used in unit 1, acted as an aid to meaning construction. MC was used to guide the learners towards the meaning of a number of idiomatic expressions that occur in the unit. Some attempt was made to use culturally conditioned ideas in the MC options. Cloze was used in several units in an attempt to focus attention on content meaning in order to build up a cultural picture or culture specific schemata. It was meant to facilitate the improvement of information processing ability in the SL.

All the units attempted to facilitate the improvement of procedural ability and the skills of reading, listening and speaking. While 11 of the 14 units have some form of writing activity, writing skills were particularly addressed in some

of the units -e.g units 3, 5, 7, 10 & 13. On the whole the units concentrated more on reading, speaking and listening activities than on writing. There were several reasons for including fewer writing activities than the other types in the units.

1. Since conveying cultural information and teaching sociolinguistic conventions was the main purpose of the teaching materials, reading, speaking and listening were more facilitative for this purpose.

2. Writing activities take up more time. Because of the limited amount of time available, in order to compress as much information as possible into a single lesson and also in order to sustain interest through variety, writing activities were limited.

3. From her past experience of working with ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, the researcher was aware that the learners find writing difficult and time consuming. Therefore, it was considered strategic to avoid including too much writing that might put the learners off.

4. One of the principles in selecting and including activities in the units was that each activity should grow out of a previous activity and be logically related. Therefore, major writing activities were limited to texts that particularly lend themselves to this type of activity (e.g writing answers to advertisements, unit 13, part 1).

However, though face to face interaction and therefore sociolinguistic conventions required for this purpose was a major preoccupation in designing the units, the importance of developing reading and writing skills was not under-rated. Because these learners have need of mastering these skills because of their immediate needs when it comes to reading, and because of their future needs when it comes to writing, it was felt necessary to concentrate on both these skills as well. The learners find writing particularly difficult as discussed in 6.4.3.2 and since this difficulty may be partially due to difficulty in mastering the rhetorical conventions necessary for organizing thought patterns logically in the SL, it was felt that it was essential to attempt to include as many writing activities as possible without making it a deterrent.

Individual and group reading activities were intended to improve comprehension skills in general and serve as a means of learning to comprehend culture specific meaning at the same time. Both reading and listening to others read and listening to speech were also meant to provide

exposure to use conventions. The activities which necessitate writing were designed to provide learners the opportunities to use discourse conventions, specific registers, rhetorical conventions etc. that have been introduced in class or brought to their notice through texts they have been studying. The writing activities were not meant to be mere exercises but genuine instances of use. Though the writing activities are learning activities as they are geared to facilitate language use and language practice in the classroom, by approaching these in terms of real life activities -e.g doing a crossword, solving a puzzle, writing a letter etc., an attempt was made to present these 'exercises' in a interest provoking manner. The different skills -reading, writing, speaking and listening- were not presented or practised in isolation but in relation to each other and in this way too it was intended to simulate instances of use.

5.2.1.5. Discussion of Sociolinguistic Conventions:

In 4.3.2.3 it was pointed out that in the case of adult ESL/EFL learners in situations such as Sri Lanka, conscious presentation of sociolinguistic conventions is essential. It was also suggested that McLaughlin, Rossman and McLeod's argument (op. cit.) that in the case of adult learners the knowledge of abstract linguistic rules would facilitate competence could be equally true of sociolinguistic conventions. In these units, a sample of sociolinguistic conventions were consciously brought to the learners' notice through focussing activities associated with texts - e.g units 1 & 5. It is not possible to think of sociolinguistic conventions in the same way as linguistic rules. Sociolinguistic 'rules' operate on the basis of a 'unwritten law'. Some steps were taken to make learners conscious about what is generally accepted as being appropriate in certain situations, among certain people etc. The approach adopted in these units was not to start off by telling learners what was appropriate and what was not. Instead the learners were asked to decide what they thought was appropriate and once they had done this, what was tacitly regarded as being appropriate was brought to their notice through a follow up discussion. The reason for this particular type of approach to consciousness raising results from the conviction that assimilation would be better facilitated by understanding the mechanics involved rather than through dogmatic presentation. For example, in unit 5, some rather humorous examples of the use of sociolinguistic conventions were presented to the learners in the extracts from *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. The learners were told what to look for in examining the extracts. Next, they were asked to write their own

sociolinguistic 'rules' and finally, the appropriacy-inappropriacy conditions were dealt with in a follow up discussion.

By reason of being experimental materials which were developed to try out a new idea, the way in which these materials would go down in a real classroom and the results they would produce could not be foreseen with any certainty. However, in developing the materials taking into account certain theoretical constructs which showed promise of being facilitatory to achieving the intended goals and by bringing together techniques and methods which have either been proved useful in this area or which showed signs of potential usefulness, it was hoped that certain predictable results would be the outcome. These are outlined in 5.2.2 below.

5.2.2. Intended Outcomes:

5.2.2.1. Primary Outcomes:

In developing teaching materials that embody texts and discourse which provide samples of CA both consciously and unconsciously, the primary hoped for outcome was that CA would explain and therefore, make it easier for the learners to comprehend and use culture specific features of the SL. These would include specific sociolinguistic conventions and more generalized cultural schemata that are necessary for a proper understanding of texts and discourse in the SL. It was hoped that CA would lead to the generation of a background picture that would facilitate the comprehension and production of the SL. In adopting a CA approach for the purpose of improving CC, it was hoped that the learners' ability to modify their knowledge of the world to accommodate culture specific aspects of the SL would be facilitated, thus making available to the learners the schematic knowledge necessary for the comprehension and production of the SL. Culture teaching was not undertaken with the hope of 'pre-programming' learners, as the researcher is aware that 'learners cannot be pre-programmed for every possible situational eventuality' (Widdowson 1984:123). What was intended primarily was to help the learners to help themselves. By making learners aware of the potential cultural specificity of both the content and the sociolinguistic conventions they may come across both in spoken and in written discourse, it was hoped to sensitize them to the possibility that comprehension and production of the SL may need modification of their world knowledge based on the MT and its conventions.

Apart from making learners aware of the culture specificity of sociolinguistic conventions and the culture specificity of background knowledge, the opportunities for use, exposure and unconscious assimilation provided by the teaching techniques were meant to help to initiate the right responses to SL cultural knowledge. It was hoped that this would aid the development of automaticity and fluency in using the SL.

5.2.2.2. Secondary Outcomes:

The teaching materials were primarily concerned with sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge, through CA. The ultimate goal however was CC which includes both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Though not intentionally 'taught' in the sense that no special drilling, exercises etc. are provided, the teaching techniques were also meant to link up with the learners' linguistic knowledge -knowledge of grammar, morphology, syntax etc. The normal teaching materials used by these learners concentrate on these features of linguistic knowledge. By making use of the learners' existing linguistic knowledge and exposing them to more in the skill developing activities resorted to in the teaching techniques used in these materials, it was hoped to aid automaticity and fluency not only in the use of sociolinguistic knowledge but in the use of linguistic knowledge and the ability to use it as well. The wide choice of texts and techniques employed in the teaching materials were meant to provide variety in order to stimulate interest and prevent boredom. By sustaining learner interest throughout, it was hoped that there would be a better chance of achieving the projected outcomes.

5.2.3. Application of the Concept of CA in the Teaching Materials - Examples:

In this section, a few selected texts and techniques from the teaching materials will be discussed in detail in order to demonstrate the validity of the claims made in the sections above. Table 5.1 given below attempts to classify the teaching materials according to theme, the sociolinguistic conventions presented and discussed in each unit, the type of text on which the methodology is based and the different types of methodology employed in each unit. The sociolinguistic features and the methodology outlined here are those that are specifically incorporated in the learners' worksheets and the teachers' notes. However, this does not mean that each unit is restricted to the presentation and discussion of these particular sociolinguistic features or

that the methodology is restricted to what is given here. There is scope for introducing sociolinguistic features not present in the texts and discourse in any given unit. This is dependent on the way the activities intended to take place in the classroom in relation to the particular unit develop. Most of the discussions for example are 'open ended' in that they are not rigidly controlled and would develop in different ways depending on the interests of a particular group of learners. This type of development cannot be envisaged in advance and it is up to the teacher to turn any advantageous openings that present themselves to good account. There is also the possibility that certain sociolinguistic features that were planned to be introduced in a particular unit could not be brought into focus in the intended manner, because of the lesson developing in an unexpected direction.

Similarly, though certain methods and techniques are suggested as being the most suitable for a given unit, once again the possibility of having to abandon some of the planned methods and employ others instead is a very real one. During the course of a session, it is possible that the teacher may discover that with a particular group of learners a particular text lends itself to a different activity than the ones set out in the unit. Similarly, the possibility of having to curtail a method, having to expand it, abandon it, substitute something else for it may also arise and cannot be foreseen. Both the the content of the teaching units and the methodology are not meant to be static but developmental. Therefore, though different units represent content and methods charted out beforehand, this is no indication that the units are limited to these. The texts that have been selected for detailed discussion are *Red Herring* and the extract from *The Collector* (unit 1), a cartoon (unit 2), statistical charts (unit 4), extracts from *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (unit 5) and *Bonfire Night* (unit 6). These texts were selected as exemplyfying the different types of texts used in the materials: poems, prose extracts, cartoons, charts and transcripts. They were also regarded as being suitable because of the scope they provide for exemplyfying the differences in the presentation of CA and sociolinguistic conventions implicitly and explicitly and the different methods and techniques used for this purpose (see appendix 3.1 for the full texts).

Table 5.1 Teaching Materials Classified According to Theme, Sociolinguistic Conventions and Teaching Techniques

Unit	Theme	Aspects of Culture According to Working Definition	Type of Text*	Sociolinguistic Knowledge**	Teaching Methodology***
			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
1	Social Strata and Lang.	Individuals, Relationships	* * * - - - * -	* * * * * * * - - *	- * * * * * - - * *
2	Travel	Activities	* - * - * - - -	- - - * * - - * * *	* * * - * * - * * *
3	Marriage	Institutions	* * - - - - - *	- - * * * * * - * *	* * * - * * * - * *
4	Employment	Activities	* - - - * - - -	- - - * - * - - * *	* * * - * * - - * -
5	Polite Speech	Individuals, Relationships	* - - - * - - -	* * * - * - * * * *	* * * - * - - - * -
6	Folklore	Relationships, Institutions Activities, Physical Reality	* * - - * * - -	- - - * * - - - * *	- - * - * * * * * -
7	Growing Up	Individuals, Relationships	* - - - - - - *	- - - * - - - - * *	* - * - * - * - * -
8	Leisure Activities	Activities	* - - * * - - -	- - - * * - - * * -	- - * - - - * - * *
9	The English Language	Individuals, Relationships Activities	- * - - - - * -	- - - * - - - - - *	* - * - * * * - * -
10	Food	Activities	* - - - - - * -	- - - * - - - * * *	* * * - * * * - * -
11	Family	Institutions, Relationships	- - - - * * - -	* - * * - - - - - -	* - * - - * * - * -
12	Climate	Physical Reality	* - - - - - - -	- - - * - - - - * *	- - * - * - * - * -
13	Advertising	Activities	* - - - - - - *	- - - * - - - * * *	- - * - * - * - * -
14	Politeness Features	Individuals, Relationships	- * - - - * - -	* * * - - - - * * *	- * - - - - - * * *

* 1 Prose Text, 2 Poem/Rhyme, 3 Cartoon, 4 Chart/Map, 5 Story, 6 Transcripts, 7 Essay, 8 Advertisements

** 1 Politeness, 2 Routines, 3 Indirect Speech, 4 Idioms, 5 Humour, 6 Irony, 7 Formulaic Lang., 8 Register, 9 Rhetorical Org., 10 Cultural Expect.

*** 1 Underlining, 2 Open-ended Quests., 3 Discussion, 4 MCQ, 5 Reading, 6 Listening, 7 Writing, 8 Cloze, 9 Practice, 10 Picture Reading

5.2.3.1. Red Herring and Extract From The Collector:

This poem and extract (see appendix 3.1, A104-5) were selected because these discuss quite explicitly the relationship between language and social strata. These also demonstrate the way in which socio-cultural attitudes are mirrored in language use. *Red Herring* by D. H. Lawrence deals with the insecurity bred in the children of parents who belong to two different social classes and believe in different ways of speaking and behaving. *Red Herring* also brings out D. H. Lawrence's views about the 'bourgeoisie'. The extract from John Fowles' *The Collector,* records the views held by a working class man and an upper class woman about each other's speech and behaviour and also reveals characteristics of speech that each think of as being the 'stamp' of the other's social class. These texts are linked thematically to the cartoon that precedes them. Being the first unit in the series, this unit sets out to introduce the concept of the relationship between language and culture to the learners. In order to do this, the learners' attention is focussed on the particular feature which illustrates this aspect quite explicitly. The learners are familiar with the concept of difference in language use according to social strata in their own society. Therefore, the concept on which their attention is focussed is not alien. What is different is the way in which the language reflect the social strata in the case of the SL. The texts themselves are used as a spring board for launching discussions about socio-cultural features of language use.

The poem is read out to the entire class by the teacher and the learners are expected to *listen* to the poem. The prose extract on the other hand, is given to the learners for individual silent reading. The texts are not dissected for comprehension purposes. Instead, the learners at this initial stage are encouraged to comprehend what information they could just by listening and reading. Next, the class divided into smaller groups are directed towards considering a particular aspect of the text meaning by focussing their attention on a theme (social stratification and language) that has been introduced earlier (in the first part of the unit). This is done by indicating that there is a link between these texts and what went before. The skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing come into the group activity that follows. The learners look at the texts and try to discover the link with the cartoon that went before by talking about it in the group. One member of the group makes notes of what is discussed in the group. Apart from trying to find the thematic link, the learners are encouraged to discuss the word meanings etc. within the group.

The teacher joins in quite unobstrusively and helps the learners to formulate their statements, questions, agreements, disagreements etc. by repeating what learners say using more appropriate forms, by repeating questions etc. Once this activity is completed the class comes together to discuss the views of the different groups. The teacher examines the 'notes' made by the different groups and formulates the discussion accordingly. Even if the learners miss the point entirely, what they do think is a sufficient opening for a discussion. In the course of this second discussion, different aspects of the relationship between language and social class brought out in the texts are covered and comparisons made with the learners' own experience of their culture. The teacher is expected to play a more active role in this second discussion in providing culture specific information, whereas in the first discussion the teacher's role is non-directive.

These particular texts were also selected as being appropriate for introducing the use of idiomatic language. This aspect is introduced not directly but by isolating the last line in the fourth verse of *Red Herring* for special consideration.

> But time has fled, our parents are dead,
> we've risen in the world all three,
> But still we are the in-betweens we tread
> between the devil and the deep cold sea.

The learners are told that there is something different about this line and are encouraged to 'see' what this difference is. The task is facilitated by working towards a comparison with the MT idiom. The special features of idiomatic meaning could be profitably discussed with reference to the MT culture and idiom. After this brief discussion, the learners are given a task in order to improve their ability to recognize idiomatic use. This is done by getting the learners to underline all idiomatic phrases they recognize in both the poem and the prose extract individually or in groups, depending on the amount of time available and the individual ability of the learners, and followed by a discussion of the learners' choices and the reasons why they think these phrases chosen by them are idiomatic. Next, a practice session in the form of a MC meaning recognition task is launched. The purpose of this is to familiarize the learners with idiomatic expressions they have been introduced to and further clarify their meaning in context. In addition, question 3 in the learners' worksheet

which encourages learners to try substituting paraphrases of idiomatic expressions in the text, draws attention to the fact that idiomatic usage cannot be paraphrased without 'loss' of meaning.

This activity designed especially for introducing idiomatic use of the SL is followed by open-ended questions which direct the lesson once more towards the cultural theme in the unit. It is not possible to predict the way in which the discussion generated by the open-ended questions would develop, but the questions have been formulated for the purpose of making further use of the texts for developing the cultural theme. For example, question 4 attempts to bring the learners' attention back to the relationship between social class and speech:

- Which lines in text 2 explicitly state the relationship between one's social class and one's speech?

The lines the learners are intended to pick out are:

'It is the way people speak that give them away, not what they say ------> She wasn't la-di-da like many, but it was there all the same.'

'What irritates me most about him is his way of speaking. Cliche after cliche -----> I know he is a victim of a miserable non-conformist suburban world and a miserable social class.'

The way the discussion develops will depend on whether they are able to pick out these lines in the first place. If they do, the discussion would be based on their reasons for their choice and what each character means by the statement s/he makes. If they have difficulty picking out these lines, some help from the teacher in the form of prompts would be required. For example:

- Is the term 'social class' mentioned anywhere?

On the other hand if the learners pick out a line such as,

'I used to think D and M's class was the worst'

they could be guided towards the language theme with a prompt such as:

- Is anything which follows related to using language? and so on.

Question **6** is intended further to emphasize the relationship between social class and attitudes, including attitudes towards language use.

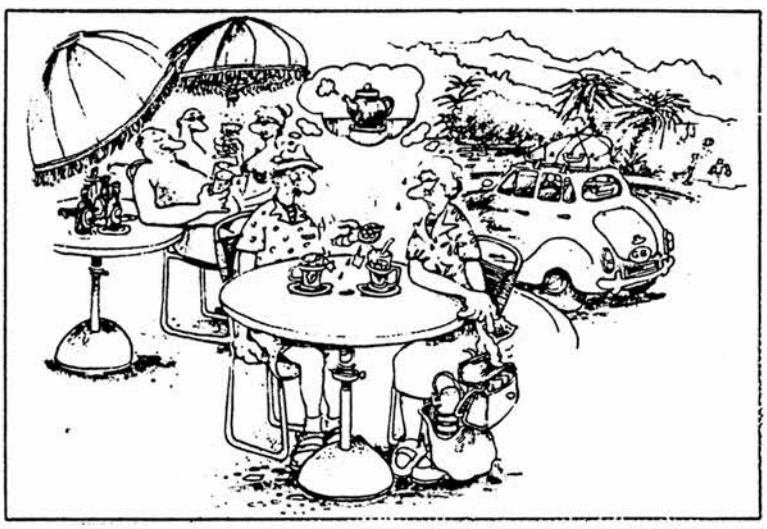
- Look at the sentence beginning 'All golf..' towards the end of text 2. Look at the phrases 'right accent', 'right money' and 'right school'. Can there be 'right' and 'wrong ' accents, money and schools? What do these phrases actually mean?

Once again the discussion would depend on what the learners feel about the possibility of there being 'right' and 'wrong' accents and whether or not they are able to link these to attitudes. If they feel that it depends on what people 'think' this can be expanded. If they find difficulty in making this connection, it will be necessary to try a different approach such as an example from the MT:

- In Sinhala would you use terms such as *machan* or *kaduwa* (Sinhala slang usage) in a formal situation? Why not? etc.

in order to get learners thinking in terms of social attitudes.

5.2.3.2. The Cartoon from Unit 2:



This cartoon is meant to be the basis of a discussion of the place of

foreign travel in the English concept of holiday. Cultural suppositions and cultural stereotypes are meant to be brought into focus and the way in which these create cartoon humour are meant to be discussed.

As a preliminary step, copies of the cartoon are handed out to the class divided into groups, for a picture reading task. As this is combined with group discussion, it is meant to facilitate comprehension of a culture conditioned cartoon, individual performance in the form of suggestions, assertions, questions, contradiction of opinions and so on, and in the course of this provide opportunities for the use of sociolinguistic and discourse conventions. Once again, it is not expected that the learners would be able to do all this unaided. Help in the form of prompts, suggestions and frames for emulation from the teacher as well as a certain amount of subtle manouvering is called for. The learners while being allowed to work out the meaning of the cartoon for themselves need to be guided along in an unobstrusive manner as to how to say what they want to say. The exact manner in which this is to be accomplished cannot be stipulated before hand and will depend on the way the activity progresses.

One of the special areas selected for treatment in relation to this 'text' is the socio-cultural aspect of humour. The way in which cultural stereotypes contribute to cartoon humour was introduced in unit 1. This concept is to be developed further in this unit. The way in which cartoons make use of minor details for the purpose of creating humour and how these details could often be cultural is one of the areas that need to be explored.

The learners' attention is also meant of be drawn to the difference in the concept of holiday of English speaking cultures to that of Sinhala speaking culture. This theme which has already been introduced in the first part of the unit is further developed in the next part of the unit. Though a cartoon is particularly useful for the purpose of demonstrating the way humour is culture conditioned and to present features of this culture conditioned humour, the activities surrounding the cartoon are not limited to just this one aspect. Looking at the cartoon and trying to work out the meaning is initially an attempt to train learners how to construct meaning from graphic displays in which meaning is not very obvious unless the 'reader' has reference to background knowledge. Thus, comprehension skills come into play. Secondly, cultural information about travel and holidays is conveyed. Thirdly, the group

discussions provide opportunities for using the learners linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and in doing this to improve this knowledge and the ability to use it. The learners are engaged in expressing their views, agreeing/disagreeing with other members of the group, asking for clarification from each other and so on. The teacher could contribute to this activity while being careful not to be too forthcoming with information that the learners need to discover for themselves. Some of the cultural information has to be necessarily conveyed by the teacher but at the same time it is necessary for the teacher not to dominate the discussion. The learners can be helped to discover information for themselves instead of being given this information directly. It is necessary for the teacher to make sure that the cultural information is getting through. This could be done partly by drawing the learners' attention to details in the cartoon that the learners do not seem to notice or do not attach any significance. The information conveyance could thus occur in several ways: some of it is directly derived from the cartoon by the learners, some of it is constructed with the help of the teacher, some of it is gleaned through reference to the learners' already existing knowledge (e.g knowledge of travel and tourism as it applies to Sri Lanka) and some information is directly conveyed by the teacher. This cartoon can be satisfactorily used to help the learners to modify their holiday schema in order to make it easy for them to comprehend information dealing with travel and tourism in the SL, and to make them aware of the humour in the SL.

5.2.3.3. Statistical Charts from Unit 4:

The statistical charts (see appendix 3.1, A127-28) are used to introduce the theme of employment in unit 4. Though employment and problems to do with it could be regarded as universal, the concept of employment in each culture tends to be different depending on the type of jobs that are available, employment preferred by members of that particular society, jobs that give satisfaction to people engaged in them and the notion of prestige associated with certain jobs. It is this cultural specificity and the way in which it manifests itself in the language that this unit as a whole tries to illustrate. These charts are used as introductory texts. Since the first chart shows the percentage of people in different jobs who would give up work if they won the pools, and since it is presumed that many of the learners if not most would not be familiar with the concept, the theme is introduced by a general discussion which paves the way for introducing the relationship between the

concepts of employment and monetary gain. This discussion launched by throwing open to discussion the question: 'What are the different ways in which people become rich? is intended to lead on to the concept of the 'sweepstake' as being a means of becoming rich. This is something that Sri Lankan learners are familiar with. The learners are encouraged to express their ideas freely in this discussion, providing them opportunity to use what linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge they possess.

At the next stage when the learners are asked to decide on what they think are the highest and least paid jobs, it is expected that the learners will operate according to the Sri Lankan concept in deciding on their choices. To check this assumption the learners' choices are discussed before giving them the chart which lists the information about the highest and least paid jobs.

The second chart too is preceded by a discussion in which the relative importance of job satisfaction and monetary gain is discussed. This discussion is initiated with an open-ended question; 'If you won Rs. 250,000 on the sweepstake, would you still want to do a job?' and following it by prompting the learners to give reasons for their decisions. Once the second statistical chart is given out to the learners and the wage earning hierachy that they had decided upon is compared with this chart, the anomalies in their choices should be made the focus of the next discussion. It is possible to say with a good deal of certainty that there is bound to be many anomalies as the learners are bound to go by the Sri Lankan wage-earners hierachy which is very different to that in Britain.

There are many obvious cultural differences in both the employment structure and in the attitude towards employment in the two cultures and some indication of these differences can be given by discussing these charts in class. A clergyman belonging to the wage earning category is in itself a cultural revelation to the Sri Lankan learner. Both the Sri Lankan's attitude towards employment and what is considered as prestigious work in Sri Lankan culture tend to be different. This theme is further developed in the rest of the unit, but a great deal of cultural information can be conveyed by discussing these charts.

Apart from imparting conscious CA, the discussions generated by these charts could be satisfactorily directed to get learners involved in the very

important business of language use. The learners are called upon to solve problems -e.g having to decide on word meaning through discussion, to deduce information from a 'sketch', to convey information to others, to give reasons for choices made and so on. In doing all this they are provided the opportunity to practice their linguistic knowledge as well as newly gained sociolinguistic knowledge.

5.2.3.4. Extracts from Alice Through The Looking Glass:

Extract 2

'I was thinking' Alice said politely, 'which is the best way out of this wood: It's getting so dark. Would you tell me please?'
But the fat little men looked at each other and grinned.
.....
'You've begun wrong!' cried Tweedledum. 'The first thing in a visit is to say 'How do you do?' and shake hands!' and here the two brothers gave each other a hug, and then held out the two hands that were free to shake hands with her.

Extract 4

There was a long pause. 'Is that all?' Alice timidly asked.
'That's all' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Good-bye'.
This was rather sudden, Alice thought, but after such a *very* strong hint that she ought to be going, she felt it would be hardly civil to stay. So she got up, and held out her hand.
'Good-bye till we meet again', she said as cheerfully as she could.

These extracts follow the introduction of greeting conventions in unit 5, and the concept that greetings etc. too seem to occur according to certain 'rules' (for full text see appendix 3.1, A134-35). Before the extracts from *Alice Through the Looking Glass* which illustrate several types of greeting conventions in rather humorous situations are given to the learners, they are given some overt information about 'conventions' and the concept is brought into focus by relating it to use conventions in the learners' MT and by drawing attention to certain cultural differences. Because of the special characteristics present in culture specific politeness conventions, it is intended to bring these to the learners' notice consciously. After introducing this concept the learners are given some information about the book from which the extracts are taken.

Again, with adult learners, this type of information adds to the interest of the lesson material. After being 'briefed' in this way, the learners are asked to examine the extracts individually or as a group. They are asked to pick out the conventional greeting found in each extract and to try and decide what sort of 'rule' is in operation in each case. At this point in the unit this is only meant as a recognition task. The actual practice session comes later in the unit. What is attempted here, is to familiarize learners with the concept of 'conventions' in relation to ESL, to indicate some ways in which these differ from the MT conventions, to provide some examples which are embedded in contexts not too difficult for the learners to understand, to get them to recognize the different conventions and to get them to 'see' the sort of 'rules' that underlie these greetings.

5.2.3.5. Bonfire Night Transcript (Unit 6):

Bonfire Night is one of the four tapes used in the lesson units and provides information about a traditional custom which has its origins in a historical event. As in the case of the other texts which deal with unfamiliar subject matter, some information about the subject matter of the transcript is provided by the teacher before the learners actually listen to the text. The learners are encouraged to ask questions and the teacher is expected to provide additional information if necessary. In the course of this discussion, the way in which historical events have left their mark on the language –in this case on the lexicon– is brought to the learners' notice and compared with examples from the learners' MT.

Apart from providing cultural information, this transcript is intended to be used for the purpose of developing listening comprehension skills and the ability to deduce meaning from a context. The learners first listen to the text and in groups discuss what they hear. The amount of information the learners will be able to gain just by listening would not be very much, as apart from being spoken at normal speed, the overlap, hesitations, pauses etc., make it still more difficult for the learners to understand very much at first. They are encouraged to deduce as much information as possible and to share it with others in the group. This information may be in the form of lexical units they have picked up or meaning units. The information would thus be in the form of units such as 'something about a fire', 'spacecrafts and rockets', 'something about cutting trees' and so on. The learners are encouraged to put these

different bits together in building some sort of picture. The activity involves not only listening and comprehension skills but also speech and reasoning skills.

This activity is followed by giving learners a copy of the transcript of the conversational extract in which every 8th word has been left blank. They listen to the text again and try to find out the missing words while they listen. The purpose of this activity is to train learners to listen to meaning units instead of processing texts word by word. On completing this task the learners are invited to ask questions in order to enable them to solve any problems they had encountered. This in turn is expected to lead on to a further discussion of cultural information. In the course of this discussion, the way in which speakers of a language presuppose information is meant to be brought to the learners' notice by referring to such presuppositions in the text –e.g the opening line 'we're looking forward to bonfire night'– and by referring to presuppositions in the learners' MT.

The main purpose for which this text is used is for the conveyance of culture specific information and to provide an example of the way in which cultural events have left their mark on the language. Though being an actual conversation this text provides examples of sociolinguistic conventions such as conversational gambits, turn taking devices, initiating and responding to topics etc. no plans were made for using this information. These learners have difficulty in processing speech at normal speed and when coupled with the overlap, hesitation phenomena etc. that occur in the tapes, their task of comprehending what is said becomes very difficult. While it was felt that listening to tapes and looking at transcripts and discussing cultural information found in them would be beneficial to the learners, it was felt that it would be too great a burden for the learners if anything other than content comprehension was attempted in relation to tapes at this stage. It was hoped that although the learners' attention was not drawn to discourse conventions consciously, some benefit would be derived from the learners being exposed to these conventions via the tapes and transcripts.

5.3. Evaluation of Teaching Materials

The teaching materials described in 5.2 above can be evaluated in two ways. Firstly, the value of the teaching materials depends on their effectiveness in achieving what they were meant to achieve. Secondly, the materials can be evaluated in the light of recent research findings in theoretical areas linked to concepts that form the basis of the theoretical constructs that underlie the materials.

As discussed in detail in chapter 6, the teaching materials did not prove sufficiently effective to bring about a statistically significant change in the learners' level of CC as measured in the Bachman and Palmer tests and especially in their sociolinguistic competence between pre and post tests. As also discussed in chapter 6, many factors may be held to be responsible for this outcome. On the other hand, as observations made during classroom sessions described in chapter 6 indicate, the materials did prove effective in getting learners interested in socio-cultural features underlying the use of the SL, in making learners aware of the sociolinguistic conventions of the SL, in generating discussion and getting learners involved in activities that provided them opportunities for using their linguistic knowledge. Research findings in areas such as schema theory, pragmatics and discourse analysis on the whole cast a favourable light on the materials both in terms of objectives and methods. Some of these findings will be discussed in relation to the materials in the next subsections.

5.3.1. Evaluation of Teaching Materials in the Light of the Newer Theories:

The ultimate objective of the teaching materials as discussed earlier is the improvement of the ESL learners' CC. The suggested means to attain this end is the development of sociolinguistic competence, through CA. In addition, the teaching materials set out to provide opportunities for developing automaticity and fluency in the use of both linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge through use. That CA is indeed a very important factor both in perception and production of language is supported by extensive research findings in the areas of schema theory, discourse analysis and pragmatics. While supporting the text types and techniques used in the materials these findings also indicate how these texts and techniques could have been used to still greater advantage.

5.3.1.1. Relevant Findings in Schema Theory:

Schema theory is basically a theory about background knowledge networks. According to schema theorists, this knowledge is stored in long term memory in the form of 'images' and is constantly in the process of changing and evolving. Schemata play an active role in understanding, remembering, information processing and also in information seeking (Rumelhart 1980:34, 51). According to Widdowson,

> 'Schemata can be defined as cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in long term memory and which provide a basis for prediction. They are kinds of stereotypic images which we map on to actuality in order to make sense of it, and to provide it with a coherent pattern' (1983:34).

What is of particular importance from the point of view of the teaching materials under consideration is the fact that more and more research seem to indicate the close relationship between culture and schemata. Among those researchers who discuss this relationship are Freedle (1979:xii), Tannen (1979:37), Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:554, 1986:560), Rumelhart (1980:37, 39) and Steffensen (1986:73) among others. Rumelhart (op. cit.) visualizes this relationship in the following way:

> 'The total set of schemata we have available for interpreting our world in a sense constitute our private theory of the nature of reality. Schemata are active computational devices capable of evaluating the quality of their fit to the available data'.

The aim of these teaching materials is to make available to the learners the type of background knowledge –culture specific schemata, that would enable them to comprehend and produce discourse in the SL. What is attempted in the teaching materials could be regarded as being the facilitation of 'pattern generation' (Rumelhart and Norman 1977, cited in Rumelhart 1980:54). The materials start off by making use of an universal theme which could be assumed to have a general schema available to all. The modification of this schema is carried out by analogy: by modifying it in relation to already available knowledge in the form of the learners' culture specific schema and by the introduction of new SL culture specific material. This fits in quite neatly with the process as described by schema theorists such as Rumelhart:

> 'Patterned generation involves the creation of a new schema by copying and old one with a few modifications. Such learning is by essence learning by analogy. We learn that a new concept is like an old one except for a few differences' (op. cit.)

In relation to the patterned generation of schemata, the CA objectives of the teaching materials could be regarded as being supported by schema theory.

The theoretical concept adopted in the teaching materials that background CA could ultimately help the learners not only to improve their sociolinguistic knowledge but also the automaticity and fluency in using these is also supported by schema theoretic findings. Spiro (1980:245-278) describes the special kind of automaticity brought about by schema availability as 'immersion'. He describes this concept in relation to reading, where the reader is able to 'get into' the situation, where the reader gets so involved that s/he forgets that s/he is reading. He discusses two related aspects: the 'feel' aspect of schemata (p272) and the concept of 'summary feelings' or the 'holistic image' (p272, 273). Both these concepts are closely related to the CA objective pursued in the teaching materials. By drawing the learners' attention away from the business of trying to find meaning in a text, and instead by encouraging them to work out the meanings in relation to background knowledge, an attempt is made to 'immerse' learners in the experience of the text. They are also encouraged to develop the 'feel' aspect of background knowledge, which is described as,

> 'A general impression of the whole.... very largely a matter of feeling or effect' (Bartlett 1932:206-207, quoted in Spiro 1980:272).

The CA objective of the teaching materials which aims to improve CC through improved sociolinguistic competence is supported by schema theoretic findings which illustrate the important link between culture and background schemata and the way in which patterned generation can be brought about. What the teaching material attempts to do in trying to build a cultural picture as a preliminary step in explaining sociolinguistic conventions and enabling learners to use them is a step in the right direction when viewed in the light of schema theoretic findings. Spiro also suggests that the availability of holistic schemata may lessen the burden of processing capacity, as these schemata would serve the same purpose as chunks of language. This too is a point in favour of a CA

approach.

Schema theory reveals some important information that is useful in evaluating the texts and techniques used in the materials. To consider the type of texts used in the teaching materials first, most of these because of their culture conditioned characteristic are facilitatory for the patterned generation of schemata. When preceded and followed by discussions in which comparison is made with the learners' own culture, these texts should help the learners to learn by analogy, by helping them to modify existing schemata which would in turn accommodate the meaning construction of SL culture specific texts. As Tannen's study shows, the visual medium seems to be particularly appropriate for the elicitation of culture specific interpretations. Therefore, the cartoons used in the materials seem to be appropriate for the same reason. Quite a few of the texts used in the materials are from literary discourse. Literary discourse seems to have an ingredient that is particularly helpful in training learners not to fall back on familiar schemata. Widdowson points out that,

> '...denial of expectation with the consequent requirement to develop an appropriate schema by retrospective construction is a particular feature of literary discourse. Whereas other kinds of discourse converge on established schema, literary discourse diverges from them' (1983:37).

Using literary discourse for the purpose of creating CA, seems to be a suitable device when viewed in the light of these views.

The teaching materials as they stand give an important place to idiomatic usage, because idiomatic usage is regarded as being particularly culture specific and a necessary part of a language user's sociolinguistic competence. Ortony's discussion of metaphor in relation to schema theory (1980:349–365) presents some interesting findings. Ortony reports an experiment conducted by Ortony, Shallert, Reynolds and Antos in 1978, which reveals that idioms are understood faster than the same expressions conveyed literally. Apart from providing ease and fluency in speech, idiomatic use seems to ease the processing burden, thus indicating that it is certainly worthwhile teaching learners to comprehend and use these. Furthermore, what Ortony says in relation to metaphor could be regarded as being equally true of idioms in general because some idioms tend to be metaphors (e.g the Indians are on the

warpath), and idioms in general operate in the same way as metaphors on analogy, inference, cultural knowledge and schemata availability.

> 'Metaphor is more than a linguistic and psychological curiosity... It is also a means of conveying and acquiring new knowledge and of seeing things in new ways... metaphors are an important ingredient in learning and understanding' (1980:361-362).

The research by Arter (1976) quoted by Ortony, in which Arter investigated comprehension levels on the basis of a text which contained metaphor and another version of the same text in which literal expressions conveying the same/similar meaning were substituted for the metaphors, shows that the method of literal meaning substitution adopted in some of the units was a satisfactory procedure. This procedure makes it possible to bring to the learners' awareness the fact that substituting literal meaning for idioms is difficult, makes the text less satisfactory and sometimes even more difficult to understand.

Research findings regarding story schema are also particularly relevant to these teaching materials as stories play a very important role in these. As discussed in the section dealing with classroom observations in chapter 6.4.3.3, the use of stories in the teaching materials was successful in conveying cultural information. In teaching CA, what is intended is to make the learners aware of the cultural schemata of the language. Some of the recent research into background schema has relevance for pedagogical applications in this area. Research which shows that the amount of retention in reading texts (e.g stories) in the SL/FL is schema related, is particularly relevant. The SL learners' inability to retain information, revealed in classroom observations during the present investigation, is possibly linked with the lack of cultural schema that is necessary to comprehend the material. The work of Spiro (1977:131-166) Kintsh and Greene (1978:1-13), Steffensen et al. (1979:10-29), Steffensen and Joag-Dev (1984:48-62), Carrell (1981a:169-181, 1981b:123-132, 1983:183-207, 1984:81-92, 1985:727-753), Carrell and Wallace (1983:295-308), Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:552-573),Johnson (1981:169-181, 1982:503-516), Freedle and Meyer (1984:121-143), Hinds (1984:45-70), and Connor (1984:239-256) discuss the importance of schema in text comprehension.

Referring to story schema Kintsh and Greene state that,

> '....story schemata are culture specific. The schema... holds for stories from a European cultural background. Story telling conventions in other cultures may diverge greatly from this schema... If readers use the story schema to help them in comprehending the story or in reconstructing it, it follows that stories that are constructed according to a familiar schema should be easier to process than stories built according to an unfamiliar schema' (ibid:2).

Carrell points out that,

> 'Each type of text -e.g stories, fables, expository and scientific texts- has its own conventional structure, and knowledge of these conventions aid readers in comprehending the text as well as recalling it later' (Carrell 1984:87).

From observing the difficulties experienced by the subjects in the present study in recalling texts, the point made by Carrell and others seem to be further justified. From among the different types of texts used in the experiment, stories were better understood and recalled than more factual texts, but the recall was often limited to the broader framework (see 6.4.3.3.3).

A good deal of research has been done in the area of story schema in order to test the process that governs both story comprehension and story recall. Stein and Glen (1979:53-120) report on a study based on the categories of Rumelhart's story grammar (Rumelhart 1975, cited in Stein and Glen 1979:56). Commenting on the results of two story comprehension and recall studies involving 1st and 5th grade children Stein and Glen conclude that,

> 'When reading or listening to a story, subjects expect certain patterns of information, attend to informational sequences that match these patterns and organize incoming information into similar patterns' (ibid:115).

The structure of these patterns which form part of the findings of story schema research is what is of most interest for ESL pedagogy. The possibility of using story schema theoretic findings about story structures and the way these aid comprehension, production and recall to facilitate these processes in ESL learners is of pedagogical interest. Stein and Glen also suggest that,

> 'there may be significant differences between cultures in the types of distinctions used by processors' (ibid:58)

and in fact researchers such as Carrell (op. cit.), Steffensen and Joag-Dev and Steffensen et. al. (op. cit.) have investigated this aspect of story schema and found it to be culture specific. The link between CA and story schema suggests the possibility of improving ESL learners' comprehension, production and recall of narratives by paying attention to culture specific story schemata and bringing these to the learners' notice.

Schema theory is concerned with the whole process of the interaction of background knowledge, cognitive processes and language production and perception. Though schema theory has shed a good deal light on the processes that go on in language perception, production, comprehension and recall, these processes are so complex that the vast amount of research and the many interesting findings still leave many areas unexplored and many questions unanswered. For example, Spiro points out that next to nothing is known about '... the radical restructuring of existing knowledge as a result of encountering new information, what might be called conceptual change or, after Piaget accommodation' (1980:271). Schema theory does seem to indicate that such restructuring goes on and its through more research, especially in the area of teaching and learning languages that more light could be shed on such processes. Though schema theory does seem abstract in some ways, this is partly because it deals with cognitive processes which are more difficult to investigate, describe and explain. It is however not so abstract as not to lend itself fully to empirical work in the area of pedagogy, and a great deal of empirical work in relation to schema theory has been done in the areas of reading comprehension, recall protocols, discourse, story grammars and so on. Findings in these areas are applicable to classroom situations, though the best ways of doing this are not always clear. Though some areas of schema theory are not developed enough as yet to make practical application possible, other findings especially on schemata generation, comprehension processes and recall are advanced enough to be made use of in the classroom.

The lesson materials that were constructed and used in the trials were geared towards making CA in the SL available to the learners; the building of a cultural picture to enable the use of sociolinguistic conventions of use or in schema theoretic terms the facilitation of the patterned generation of schemata. The close relationship between schema theory and background knowledge and research in the area of schema theory seems to support the ways in which the CA goal was pursued in the teaching materials. As

discussed earlier in the section, schema theoretic research reveals several ways in which the material could be improved but does not highlight particular shortcomings as such in the original materials.

Findings in schema theory research indicate various other ways in which stories could be profitably used for developing SL schemata. These possibilities will be discussed in detail together with other suggestions for revising the material in the next subsection. When viewed in the light of these new theories and in relation to the experience of using these materials in the classroom, it is possible to say that the stories in the teaching materials could be used more advantageously by taking these findings into account.

5.3.1.2. Findings from Discourse Analysis:

Schema theory is closely linked with theories of discourse and in turn discourse is also closely related with culture, as Freedle points out (1979:xiii). Rumelhart sees the relationship between discourse and schemata in the following way:

> '... the process of understanding discourse is the process of finding a configuration of schemata that offers an adequate account of the passage in question' (1980:47).

Because of this close relationship, the research findings in these areas are also closely related. The processes involved in meaning construction in discourse are invariably linked to background knowledge both in terms of content knowledge and knowledge of 'rules', and hence linked to schemata. In evaluating the teaching materials under consideration, the most relevant finding in discourse that needs to be examined is the concept that neither text nor discourse have an 'inbuilt' meaning. The same text may provide different meanings and different amounts of meaning to different readers. Though this is true of discourse in face to face interaction as well, it is more so in the case of written discourse because of the writer's not being present when the interaction takes place. Current discourse theory has pointed out the fallacy of regarding texts as meaning laden and the readers as merely passive receptacles. Widdowson takes this theoretical position in stating that,

> 'What a reader gets out of a text will depend on his interest and purpose in reading, as well as his ability to relate what is

> said to his own knowledge of the world... the effectiveness of communication in written language corresponds to the degree of congruence between writer intention and reader interpretation.. This reconstitution will crucially depend on the writer and reader sharing knowledge of different kinds' (1984:51-52).

This view of the relationship between written discourse and reader interpretation is once more favourable to the CA objective of the teaching materials. For, Widdowson goes on to discuss the different kinds of knowledge that the writer and reader need to share and among these are '..knowledge of particular conventions of communication, like the rhetorics (or registers if you will), knowledge of certain specific conventions of discourse'. It is necessary for the writer and reader to share linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and background schemata. In the case of ESL learners such as those in Sri Lanka, there may be a mismatch when it comes to all these types of knowledge, but it is bound to be particularly so in the case of sociolinguistic conventions of discourse and background schemata. In such cases, either lack of understanding or misunderstanding may result, as the reader will superimpose his/her knowledge of a different system onto the text. Considering the readers' problems in constructing discourse from text, Widdowson goes on to say that in such situations,

> 'The reader may allow his own reality, his own attitudes and ideas, to override his ability to perceive the clues [provided by the writer]' (ibid:51).

That this is particularly liable to occur as a result of referring to a different schema is revealed in Steffensen's research on background schema. Discussing three experiments in which a group of Indian and American women, a group of American and Australian Aborigine women and a group of American rural white and black inner city eighth graders took part, Steffensen points out that the difference in background schemata affect not only the construction of meaning but also the processing of cohesive devices in texts. She concludes that,

> 'These three cross cultural studies provide powerful evidence that 'routine' cultural knowledge and assumptions are an important factor in understanding, remembering and recalling discourse' (1986:73).

In making use of culture specific texts containing culture specific information, culture specific sociolinguistic conventions and rhetorical conventions, the teaching materials address this very problem. In trying to develop CC through making learners consciously aware of the differences in the socio-cultural conventions in the SL, the teaching materials try to train learners not to superimpose the knowledge of their MT conventions and the knowledge of their own culture on to the SL texts. From a discourse theoretical viewpoint, it can be seen as trying to narrow the gap between writer intention and reader expectation.

The way in which cultural expectations (cultural frames and schemata) can lead to very different interpretations of even the most uncomplicated 'texts' is demonstrated in Tannen's study of reactions to a film among a group of subjects is Berkley, California and another group in Athens, Greece (1979:137-181). Tannen points out that,

> 'In discussing the events and people in the movie, subjects organized and altered the actual context of the movie in many ways. The ways in which they did this are evidence of the effect of their structures of expectations about objects and events in the film. The comparison of narratives told by Greek and American subjects make it possible to see that these structures are often culturally determined' (1979:145).

Findings in discourse research indicate that in processing discourse in order to arrive at congruence between writer intention and reader interpretation, it is essential for the writer and reader to share background knowledge and expectations. This is also true of visual presentations as demonstrated by Tannen. The CA objective of the teaching materials is in perfect accord with this discourse theoretical view point.

In evaluating the texts and methodology used in the materials in relation to research findings in the area of discourse, the suitability of some of the techniques becomes apparent, while at the same time pointing out the greater untapped potential of these texts and methods. Activities involving writing skill are particularly relevant for consideration here. As discussed in the classroom observations reported in 6.4.3.3.3, the activities geared towards encouraging learners to write, in order to develop their writing skills and to provide them opportunities for developing their sociolinguistic knowledge of rhetorical and discourse conventions, were not successful. Discourse research sheds some

light on this problem. Apart from the lack of mastery of the linguistic system and the rhetorical conventions of the language, the learners problem could be viewed as partly resulting from their inability to foresee reader reaction and to visualize the text as discourse. The teaching materials make an effort to overcome the learners' writing problems by making them conscious of the culture specific rhetorical conventions and prose structure by providing help in organizing their ideas and so on. They do not however visualize the problem of writing as being one of establishing a writer-reader relationship. This problem and ways in which it could be remedied in the light of findings in discourse research will be discussed in the next subsection.

This point is equally true regarding planned speech. In an endeavour to get learners to use their sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge in real use situations, activities in which learners are expected to prepare planned speech have been included. These take the form of narration of stories, reporting of some event or happening etc. Difficulties of organizing planned narration may again be a result of omitting to take the listener into account. The importance of making the learners aware of having to play two roles in writing and in planned speech is made evident in the findings of discourse research. Since rhetorical and discourse conventions pertaining to writing and planned speech are also dependent on the writer/speaker being able to foresee the reader/listener reaction, not taking this aspect into account is a shortcoming.

5.3.1.3. Findings in the Area of Pragmatics:

In evaluating the objectives hoped to be attained and the texts and methods used in trying to attain these objectives, research findings in the area of pragmatics are also of interest. Morgan and Green (1980:113-140) describe pragmatics as being:

> '...the study of the ways in which linguistic context determines the propositions expressed by a given sentence in that context and includes the study of speech acts and illocutionary force, as discussed in Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), indexicals, knowledge, beliefs, expectations and intentions of the speaker and hearer, and other aspects of context that bear on the determination of the propositions expressed by the use of a sentence in a particular context' (ibid:116).

They point out that in addition the term pragmatics is also applied to studies

of discourse structure, politeness and difference and social interaction in communication. They go on to state that,

> 'What unites all these apparently disparate areas under the same term is the crucial role played in each by inference in context about the speaker' (ibid.).

This uniting factor –inference– is that which makes pragmatics a particularly relevant theoretic area for consideration in relation to the teaching materials evaluated here. Inference like schemata and congruence of writer and speaker expectations discussed above is linked with one's knowledge of the world in general and of one's knowledge of one's culture in particular. In reading cultural meaning, in processing rhetorical and discourse conventions and in responding to sociolinguistic conventions one is called upon to draw inferences on the basis of one's knowledge and experience. As Morgan and Green point out,

> 'Knowledge of a language provides only a class of expressions that *could* be used, by virtue of the meanings of their parts, as performance formulae; knowledge of culture (law, religion, games, etiquette etc.) tells us which (if any) of the natural candidates is actually recognized as a valid performative formula for a given purpose' (ibid:130).

The importance of inference in meaning construction recognized in pragmatics supports the CA objective of the teaching materials. In addition, the type of language phenomena that form the sociolinguistic conventions of a language are also closely related to pragmatics. Speech acts and especially indirect speech acts which are made use of in English for expressing politeness and saving face among other things form another link with pragmatics. Once again, it is inference that comes into play here.

Though phenomena such as speech acts are regarded as being universal, the way in which these operate have been found to be culture specific as pointed out by Blum-Kulka (1983:37).

> 'Though certain basic phenomena of speech act performance such as indirectness in discourse, might be based on universal principles (Brown and Levinson 1978), their manifestations may vary systematically from language to language. As a result, second language learners might fail to

> realize speech acts (especially indirect speech acts) in the target language in terms of both communicative effectiveness and social appropriateness'.

Blum-Kulka further goes on to point out that,

> 'Both the difference between languages in the devices available for the modulating of any given speech act and the social appropriateness rules that govern the choice of forms in context might affect the force potential of the forms. Since both the modulating devices and social appropriateness rules might be language specific; it follows that even seemingly similar strategies in two languages might differ in illocutionary force potential' (ibid:43).

The culture specificity of indirect speech acts and pragmatic issues such as inference and implicature have been taken into account especially in relation to politeness phenomena in the teaching materials. Drawing inferences is particularly facilitated by activities related to pictures, maps and charts. However, these have not been exploited substantially in the teaching materials as they stand. These will be discussed more fully in the next subsection which outlines the suggestions for revising the teaching material.

Research findings in the area of pragmatic theory are important in relation to these materials in areas that are particularly culture related in the SL, such as speech acts, implicature and inference. However, the research findings in the area of pragmatics that are related directly to pedagogical issues are limited when compared with findings in the areas of schema theory and discourse. The ability to gauge the effectiveness of these materials in the light of findings in the area of pragmatics is comparably less. However, both the texts used and the methods that were employed could be made more satisfactory by taking available research findings in this area also into account.

5.3.1.4. Rules of Speaking and Verbal Humour:

There are two other areas in which researh findings relevant to the teaching materials have been reported that are worthwhile examining. One of these areas is ethnography or the rules of speaking. The research findings reported in this area are interesting both in relation to CA and CC. The work of Wolfson and Manes (1981), Wolfson (1983), Tannen and Oztek (1981), Schegloff (1981), Olshtain and Cohen (1983), Fraser (1981, 1983) have shown

the culture specific nature of the rules of speaking, and how important rules of speaking are in communication.

The belief that idealized concepts of 'correctness' are often lacking in validity and that the rules of speaking can only be established by resorting to empirical surveys is being firmly established. As a result, more empirical investigations into the rules of speaking are being undertaken. The findings that have been made so far, could be useful in broadening the scope of the teaching materials used in the present experiment.

The second area, verbal humour was one of the areas found most difficult by the subjects who took part in this study (discussed in 6.4.3.3.4). While humour generated by pictures was comprehended to some degree, verbal humour drew very little response. The importance of verbal humour in CA is brought into focus by Alexander (1982:7–16). It would be useful to revise the materials in some way that would help the learners to comprehend and respond better to this type of humour.

Some of Alexander's suggestions could be profitably employed to help the learners to feel more attuned to verbal humour in the SL and to make them aware how intrinsic a part of the language this aspect is.

The usefulness of humour in motivating learners is unquestionable, as it helps to prevent language learning from becoming a drudgery and also for the simple reason that everyone enjoys a good joke. The problem in ESL, is the learners' inability to respond to humour because of their inability to comprehend 'what's going on'. The learners are often not sure how to respond to a text, because they are engaged in dissecting the text for it's 'meaning'. Even if they see something 'odd' about the text, they conclude that this is because they have not understood it. Therefore, it is essential to find some way of preventing the learners struggling with 'structures' and 'lexical meaning' and thus blinding them to the verbal humour that is found in the text.

5.3.2. Conclusions:

In the above section an attempt was made to evaluate the teaching materials discussed in the chapter in relation to some relevant ideas current in the areas of schema theory, discourse and pragmatics. The effectiveness of the teaching material cannot be gauged merely by considering how far

theoretical findings support the objectives, texts and methods as they occur in the materials. It depends largely on the way these stand up to being tried out in an actual teaching situation. The classroom observations made during the trial of these materials as part of the experiment discussed in chapter 6, are reported in 6.4.3.3. These observations of the actual trials indicate the extent to which these materials could be regarded as being satisfactory in attaining the aims and objectives discussed in chapter 4.

Considering the materials in the light of both the actual trials and the relevant research in the areas of schema theory, discourse and pragmatics it seems to be reasonable to arrive at the following conclusions regarding the value of the materials:

1. The CA objective which the materials try to realize is a reasonable one.

2. Findings in the areas of schema theory, discourse and pragmatics support the CA objective.

3. In general, the techniques used in the teaching materials are satisfactory as discussed in 6.4.3.3.3.

4. The materials have unrealized potential which could be made use of by taking account of research findings in the areas discussed above.

5. The techniques used in the materials could also be improved in the light of the newer theories.

6. The effectiveness of both the content of the teaching materials used and the techniques could be further improved by taking account of the classroom observations of the actual trials.

5.4. Suggestions for Revising the Teaching Materials:

It would be feasible to revise the teaching materials in order to improve them, taking into account insights gained from this investigation, and the insights provided by the new theories.

The teaching material could be improved in several ways:

1. The materials and texts should be updated in the light of recent research findings.

2. Texts used in the material that were found to be too

difficult by the subjects should be dropped.

3. More emphasis should be placed on techniques such as the strip story, crossword type tasks etc. that were found to be particularly successful in this experiment.

Of these three suggestions, the first suggestion regarding the updating of materials in the light of recent research findings will be discussed in detail in the section below.

5.4.1. Updating the Materials and Teaching Techniques in the Light of Recent Research Findings:

In the previous section research findings and their relevance to the teaching material were discussed as part of the evaluation of the material. In this section, the way in which these findings could be profitably used in revising the materials and teaching techniques is discussed.

5.4.1.1. CA and the Generation of Schemata:

There are possibly different ways in which research findings about the role of schemata discussed in 5.3.1.1 could be used for the improvement of ESL courses in general and the material in this study in particular. Some form of introduction to the schema underlying the particular text genre and the discourse structure of a text, might be an useful way of preparing the learners for comprehending the text. Something of this description was attempted in these materials, in the discussions which preceded the actual classroom activity such as reading or listening (e.g units 4, 5 & 7). But, these discussions did not have the familiarization of background schema as a specific goal but were mainly intended to facilitate the introduction of culture specific material. Perhaps what is needed is to emphasize this aspect in the discussions and also perhaps to organize the discussions in a way conducive to the patterned generation of schemata.

Another possible way in which these findings could be made use of is by selecting culture materials that are schematically related. Some forms of text (e.g fairy stories and folk tales) do tend to have similarities in schema, in both eastern and western culture. The hero, that Kintsh and Greene cite as being a necessary ingredient in the schema of stories from an European background, is also common to Sri Lanka. So are other aspects such as the fairy tale

beginning: 'Once upon a time'. It would be worthwhile to discuss in class features that are common to the schema of a particular type of text across the two cultures, as this would form a link between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

The employment of 'story grammars' or the underlying narrative structures that have been worked out by researchers such as Rumelhart (1975, cited in Stein and Glen 1980:53), and Stein and Glen (op. cit.) would also prove helpful. The learners could be asked to work out the structures of stories discussed in class and conversely they could be asked to build up their own stories on the basis of a story grammar that has either been suggested by the teacher or worked out collectively in the class. This activity could be combined with culture translation (discussed in 4.6.1). It could also be used for the re-telling of stories from the learners own culture in the SL. The usefulness of folk stories from the learners' culture in ESL teaching is discussed in Baynham (1986:113-120).

In making use of research findings in schema theory and the observations from the actual trials, there are yet other ways in which patterned generation of schemata could be assisted through CA. For instance, it would be profitable to try to make learners more aware of the 'structures of expectation' (Tannen 1979:137). Activities should be designed in which learners are called upon to express what they expect in certain contexts and then by comparing these expectations with what is actually found in a text dealing with such a context in the SL, make learners aware of the cultural differences in the structures of expectation. This type of activity is introduced in unit 4 on employment, in which, the learners are asked to 'grade' a list of job types according to earnings. It is also incorporated in unit 3, in relation to the poem *Leap Year*. This type of activity could be profitably introduced into other units. For example, structures of expectations could be elicited regarding holidays in unit 2, regarding marriage customs in unit 3 and leisure activities in unit 8 and so on.

Schemata generation could also be facilitated by following the type of procedures used in an experiment by Bransford and Johnson (1973) reported in Rumelhart (1980:48), in which the subjects were given a text, which was open to different interpretations in the absence of a title or any clue that indicated what the subject of the text was. As the classroom observations reveal, the learners were slavishly reliant on the text to the extent that they were willing

to accept a statement such as 'the computer had developed a stutter or had got rather drunk that day' as being literal (see 6.4.3.3.4). Spiro links the over-reliance on the text with local schema unavailability, while considering the over-reliance on context as being a result of general schema unavailability (1980:263). Local schema unavailability seems a reasonable explanation of the Sri Lankan learners' over-reliance on text as they seem to depend entirely on the words on the page for constructing meaning. By providing texts such as the 'washing clothes' text used by Bransford and Johnson, the learners would be forced to rely more on background knowledge for meaning construction, as the text by itself is not sufficient. The first activity related to the opening passage from the *Wind in the Willows* in unit 6 makes an attempt to get the learners to guess the meaning, by leaving out some vital information from the text -the identity of the person engaged in spring cleaning. This type of 'guessing game' could be extended to other units, in order to wean learners away from over-reliance on the text. The over-reliance on text is not just a symptom of local schema unavailability. It could also be regarded as a cause that inhibits patterned generation of schemata. The effect that over-reliance on text seem to have on the learners could be compared to the blurring effect that staring too hard and too long at some object has on one's vision.

Some attempt is made in the units to draw the learners' attention to the importance of context in text comprehension. Schema theoretic findings emphasize the importance of context in meaning construction as the same text has the potential of instantiating different schemata depending on the context (discussed in Spiro 1980:252). In the units, context was introduced mainly in order to establish context register relationships -e.g part 1 of unit 3, part 2 of unit 8, part 2 of unit 13. In revising the material it would be profitable to include background knowledge in meaning construction depending on context.

Teaching techniques suggested for the use of stories in the classroom (e.g Morgan and Rinvolucri 1983), could be useful for further facilitating the generation of story schemata and also for providing opportunities for developing the learners' ability to use narrative conventions. Simple techniques such as the use of 'story skeletons' would be helpful in the generation of story schemata, as in a story skeleton the story is reduced to the meaning bearing lexical items which enable the instantiation of the story schema by focussing attention on category types such as setting, event, attempt, consequence, reaction and so on (Stein and Glen 1979:60). In addition, by getting learners to

use story skeletons to build up stories they are forced to use natural language for story telling. Also, since learners have difficulty in recalling stories, giving them a framework and then getting them to fill in the details might help to facilitate recall.

Because of their tidy structure, stories from the folk and fairy tale genres are particularly useful in the ESL class. Since stories form a very important component in the teaching materials used in the experiment by making use of new insights on using stories in the classroom, it would be possible to make these materials more effective in achieving the CA objective and in promoting SL use in the classroom.

5.4.1.2. Speech Acts and Sociolinguistic Conventions:

The inclusion of speech acts was not a specific goal in the original teaching materials. However, some work on speech acts is incorporated into the teaching material as they stand; e.g unit 5, on politeness phenomena, but there is scope for more work in this area to be included in the material.

Since these materials were designed to teach CA, no attempt was made to teach grammar as such. In the normal ESL teaching situation, both grammar and sociolinguistic competence have to go together in teaching for CC. By including speech acts such as permissives, directives, declaratives etc. it would be possible to bring aspects of linguistic competence and aspects of sociolinguistic competence together. It would be necessary to try out different ways of presenting this material in class in order to find the most effective forms of presentation. This might prove to be an appropriate means by which grammar too could be incorporated into a use based communicative framework, which attempts to improve CC through sociolinguistic competence. The use of modality to avoid commitment to a particular opinion, course of action etc. is also a feature of sociolinguistic convention that could be presented in an advantageous way through activities that require learners to draw inferences that are based on modality. Since the concept of possibility and probability is present in one form or another in most of the texts, activities for focussing the learners attention on drawing this type of inference can be worked into many of the units -e.g units 1, 3 & 7.

Indirect speech acts and the related concept of inference are also particularly relevant in attempting to teach sociolinguistic conventions to

learners, as outlined in the previous section. Conventions pertaining to politeness are particularly dependent on the use of indirect speech in English. Indirect speech is used as a face saving device and to maintain the right degree of power and solidarity in a non-face threatening manner. Introducing more instances of indirect speech in relation to sociolinguistic conventions and more activities that provide learners the opportunity to use these conventions could be an improvement. For example, the first part of unit 1 and the second part of unit 5 deal with requests, among other things. It would be possible to develop these sections further to include more instances of indirect speech and more opportunities for practising these. Two of the extracts from unit 5 (extract 4 from part 1 and extract 5 from part 2) make available further examples of inferencing. The use of 'good-bye' as a signal of dismissal or conclusion of an interaction and the 'this was made/done etc. specially for you' construction used to signal hearer obligation would be useful in further enlightening learners on inferencing in the SL, and how these forms of inferencing are politeness related. These examples could be isolated for further consideration, discussed in relation to the learners' MT conventions and linked with other declaratives -e.g I'm rather tired, I've quite a lot of home work to do etc., and questions -e.g Won't you be late to work? Isn't it too early for that? etc. from which inferences are meant to be drawn. The way in which these are related to the realization of politeness (the theme in unit 5) in the MT would be useful in further exemplyfying the culture specificity of these pragmatic aspects related to politeness.

The area of speech acts in pragmatics is an area where conscious discussion of 'rules' might prove to be profitable in the case of adult ESL learners. As discussed in 5.3.1.3, the realization of speech acts tends to differ culturally. The way in which the speech act of promising is realized in Sinhala is quite different to English. While in English there are occasions when the statement 'promise' does not realize the act of promising as pointed out by Stubbs (1986:5), swearing as a promise is quite common in Sinhala. Swearing equivalent to 'on my word of honour' form in English is quite common in Sinhala, much more so than in English, and has a definite cultural bias as the objects on which the swearing is done -e.g by (my) mother, by (my) two eyes, by the Buddha etc. reveal. More work on the way speech acts are realized in the SL could be profitably included in the lesson units, using texts in the units as a basis. Both concepts of promise and swear occur in unit 3, in the text

Betrothal the British Way (see appendix 3.1, A119). In the original unit, this text is used to introduce one culture specific aspect of marriage: the engagement, and to discuss the differences in cultural attitudes to the institution of marriage. In addition, the text could be used to introduce the concept of speech acts; the speech acts of promising and swearing being used to introduce this concept. The cultural difference in the way in which these speech acts are realized could be discussed and possibly other speech acts in English introduced and compared with the realization of these speech acts in the learners' MT.

Another of the units that can be revised quite easily to include work on speech acts is unit 13 on advertising. Blum-Kulka quoting Higa (1983:37), reports that while Japanese tend to use indirect patterns in advertisements, American advertisements use indirect imperative forms. Apart from discussing cultural assumptions that underlie advertising it would also be possible to look at direct/indirectness of language in the advertisements in the SL and the MT. Two of the advertisements used in unit 13: the British Airways advertisement and the Anne French advertisement (see appendix 3.1, A148, A151) are examples of advertisements which try to persuade would be employees/customers the benefits of choosing what they have to offer. These two advertisements could be used to make learners aware how speech acts such as persuading can be realized and in fact are realized indirectly in the SL. In addition, the Anne French advertisement could also be used for further work on inference; the type of inference the advertisers intend readers/viewers to draw from reading/viewing the advertisements.

5.4.1.3. Discourse Analysis and the Improvement of Comprehension and Production Skills:

Apart from improving sociolinguistic knowledge through CA, the teaching materials also attempt to develop the different language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening, in order to improve learners' CC. A variety of activities and discussions are used in endeavouring to achieve this goal. As outlined in section 5.3 above, research findings in the area of discourse analysis could be helpful in making the materials more effective in developing these skills. As discussed in detail in chapter 6, one of the things that the teaching materials did not succeed in achieving was the improvement of the learners' writing skills. Because of the dislike evidenced by the learners and also because of

their poor performance and the lack of interest, the writing activities in the teaching materials were a failure. Possible explanations for this problem are discussed 6.4.3.3.3. In revising the materials, taking account of discourse research may prove helpful in making the teaching materials more effective in this area.

As discussed in chapter 6, the Sri Lankan learners' problem in lacking writing skills seems to be a complex one, being an amalgam of linguistic problems and sociolinguistic ones. The sociolinguistic problem is likely to be the lack of mastery of rhetorical conventions; the discourse formulae that Hatch considers as possibly more difficult to acquire than oral discourse conventions (1984:197) and also what Meyer calls the 'content structure' of prose (1977:179–200). Clearly it is necessary to revise the material in order to make them useful in developing the learners' understanding of and their ability to use these conventions. In addition, since the learners' performance indicates that they do not take the reader into account in their writing, this too has to be remedied. In discourse theoretical terms, this involves training learners to see text as discourse. One of the ways in which this could be done is by developing activities that would involve deriving text from discourse and vice versa. In order to train learners to write for a reader it seems a good idea to include activities that would require the learners to visualize reader reaction. The learners' problems may be partly due to being unaware who s/he is interacting with, as in most classroom activities, the learners are asked to write to imaginary people. The importance of knowing the recipient and the need to recognize writing as interaction are discussed in Widdowson (1984:64). This activity could be introduced in association with speech, as in speech listener reaction is taken account of. It could be further facilitated by introducing this convention in relation to conventions in the learners' MT. Working out the outline of a piece of written discourse in the form of a dialogue between writer and reader might be one way of encouraging learners to think of written text as discourse. Written discourse conventions could then be introduced as the links that bind together the writer's ideas and the writer's responses to possible reactions on the part of the reader. Discourse devices such as 'on the other hand...', 'one commonly held belief..', and 'the standard view...' cited by Hatch as being writers' devices for inviting the reader to consider his/her (the writer's) view (op. cit.) could be regarded as such links.

The text as discourse approach would be equally useful in improving the

learners' ability to deal with planned discourse. The lesson units have a fair number of activities in which the learners (usually in groups) have to plan the narration of stories, events or incidents -e,g unit 1 part 1, unit 2 part 2, or write a planned text -e.g unit 3 part 4, unit 7 part 1 and unit 13 part 1. The insights provided by discourse theory would also be helpful in making these activities more effective both in terms of improving the learners' writing skills and in enabling them to make use of discourse conventions in planned discourse. The dialogue format in which the reader/listener responses are foreseen by the writer/speaker would be useful in constructing planned discourse too. In order to illustrate the way in which the writer/speaker engaging in planned discourse such as writing, speeches or lectures tries to anticipate reader/listener reaction, a dialogue may be used as the basis for constructing planned discourse. The dialogue from *The Summer Birdcage* (unit 7, part 1) could be used to illustrate the way in which spoken discourse is assisted by the hearer responses and to point out the way in which the speaker would have to anticipate listener reaction in the absence of these spoken cues. If the arguments put forward by the character Sarah in *The Summer Birdcage* had to be conveyed in written form (i.e in a letter) planning with the reader reaction in view would be necessary. This text would be particularly helpful in making learners aware of this aspect of planned discourse. The way in which background knowledge (knowledge of the specific or probable reader/s) is used in planning discourse could also be illustrated. The writing of an advertisement and a letter in unit 13, part 1 would also be made easier for the learners if they are guided towards planning their writing with the reader in view.

Encouraging the learners to derive discourse from written text may also facilitate the improvement of their writing skills. Making learners aware of the way in which a group of ideas are held together in a written text, and the part played by linguistic devices on the one hand and rhetorical devices on the other in cementing these together is also likely to prove useful. The 'set of general procedures for the receptive processing of written discourse' suggested by Widdowson (1984:109), may be useful in helping learners to visualize text as discourse. The procedures are:

1. Focus attention on lexical items.
2. Assume that they are associated with each other in a

typical normal way.

3. If this procedure fails to make sense, shift attention to syntax.

The first two procedures seem to be particularly relevant in trying to help learners to assemble their ideas as a preliminary step in organizing these as written discourse. Apart from lexical items, it would be helpful to get learners to focus attention on the discourse formulae such as devices for contrastive statement -e.g 'on the other hand', 'on the contrary' etc., for accumulative argumenting -'firstly', 'secondly', 'in addition', 'furthermore' etc. and for inviting the reader to consider the writers views such as the devices quoted by Hatch (op. cit.) used in a text. This awareness is likely to prove helpful to learners in their own writing.

Providing opportunities for learners to listen to planned discourse such as lectures and talks would also contribute to the improvement of the teaching materials. Apart from making learners sensitive to the way in which planned discourse of this type is organized with the listener in mind. The learners could be encouraged to think of questions and comments while they listen to the speech/talk/lecture and think in terms of whether and if so how these questions and comments are foreseen by the speaker. The CA goal could be helped through this activity by selecting subjects for the talks/lectures that are related to the cultural theme under discussion -e.g travel, advertising etc. It would also be useful to invite native and non-native speakers of English to give these talks. While an opportunity would be provided for listening to spoken English in a natural context where speech conventions would come into play and at the same time learners would be exposed to different speech styles and accents that would also help learners to improve their perception of different speech styles.

5.4.1.4. Rules of Speaking and Verbal Humour:

The rules of speaking involved in apologizing were introduced in the units, -e.g units 1, 5, 14. These could be expanded to include a wider variety of forms of apology, and the social significance of these different types could be discussed. The combined purposes served by some types of apology -e.g expressing regret, offering to make recompense for the damage/loss etc. -could also be brought in.

Other areas such as compliments, could be introduced through the material already found in the units, -e.g unit 14. This area was not specifically introduced in the materials, but would make an useful addition, for as Manes (1983:96-102) points out,

> 'compliments represent one means whereby an individual or more importantly, society as a whole can encourage, through such reinforcement certain desired behaviours' (ibid:97).

In relation to one such socially sanctioned attribute 'newness', she says,

> 'the value placed on newness is reflected both in the fact that new acquisitions are complimented, and equally in the fact that it is possible to deny newness in responding to a compliment on attractiveness' (ibid:100).

Alexander's suggestion of using catch phrases and graffiti (1982:7-16), might prove to be a successful experiment. As in the case of cartoons, the learners are used to the idea of graffiti in their MT, and unlike in the case of cartoons without captions, most graffiti derive their humour from verbal forms. Since graffiti tend to be in the form of a few lines of text, verbal humour in this form might be easier to introduce in class. It is also possible that learners may find it easier to respond to this type of verbal humour with some guidance. It would also provide material for interesting discussions on cultural values, prejudices etc. Alexander points out, that the teaching of vocabulary can also benefit from the use of jokes, and that stylistic and register differences could be brought to the learners' notice in this way.

An attempt was made to incorporate humour in many of the lesson units in this study, -e.g units 1, 2, 3, 14. These could be made more effective by the use of more varieties of verbal humour, such as catch phrases, puns, graffiti etc.

5.5. Revised Materials - Samples

The purpose of this section is to discuss the revision of three sample units. The first two units and unit 13 have been selected for this purpose as being fairly representative of all the units in terms of the texts they contain and the teaching methods they employ. The texts from the units which are used in

different ways from the original will be quoted in full. For the complete texts of the revised units including the parts of the materials that are retained in their original form, see appendix 4. The three units will be discussed in turn in the following subsections.

5.5.1. Unit 1:

The theme of the first unit is social stratification and language, demonstrating the individuals and relationships aspect of the working definition of culture used in designing the units. Since the purpose of the teaching materials is the development of sociolinguistic competence by making learners aware of cultural features in relation to the SL, a theme which directly illustrates the relationship between language and society seems appropriate as the theme of the introductory unit. Since the theme is closely related to the concept of CA which these units are meant to develop, and because the scope it allows for introducing this theme smoothly, and because the theme proved to be satisfactory for introducing cultural information and sociolinguistic features in the classroom experiment, it is felt that the retention of this theme is justified.

Three texts on this theme of social stratification and language were used as the basis of the unit in the original materials: a cartoon, *Red Herring* by D. H. Lawrence, and an extract from *The Collector* by John Fowles. A fourth text -The English People - England at a First Glance, an essay by George Orwell- was given to the learners as additional reading to be done in their leisure time. Once again, the trials based on the original materials showed the first three texts to be satisfactory in terms of their level of difficulty, in their ability to generate learner response, in terms of the cultural information they conveyed, in their ability to generate discussions that enabled the introduction of sociolinguistic conventions of use and in their ability to provide opportunities for the learners to practice these sociolinguistic conventions in the course of discussions. Since these texts were not too difficult for the learners to comprehend and the learners seemed to find them interesting and they serve as a good basis for developing the theme of the unit, their retention seems justified. The texts in this unit were used for the purpose of generating discussions on cultural features, on politeness, on cultural expectations and social attitudes reflected in language. They were also used to highlight politeness conventions, humour and the use of idioms. Taking into account

insights gained from the trials, and from relevant research from newer research areas it would be possible to make further use of the texts within the unit. This is one of the purposes of revision.

Several different techniques were used in the unit for conveying cultural information, for improving sociolinguistic knowledge and for skill development. There were open-ended questions, discussions, MCQ, reading, listening, writing (note taking), picture reading and practice through discussion. While these techniques were on the whole fairly successful, it may be possible to make these techniques more effective by revising the presentation and the development of classroom activities in the light of the research findings. To improve the techniques is the second purpose of the revision.

The teachers' notes accompanying the learners' worksheets are meant to be guidelines for presenting the material in class. Having observed the way in which these texts and techniques actually work in a classroom situation, it becomes possible to make use of this experience to revise the teacher notes to make them more effective as guidelines. For example, guidelines for conducting discussions are fairly general in the original teacher notes. Making use of the classroom observations it is possible to revise these to provide more specific guidelines for manouvering discussions in order to provide maximum opportunity for learner use of sociolinguistic conventions.

5.5.1.1. Part 1 – Cartoon:

In the original unit this cartoon is used to discuss:

1. social stratification as reflected in language use
2. social attitudes to non-standard speech, dialects and accents
3. politeness features in English
4. cultural stereotypes

In revising the material taking into account both findings from the trials and the theoretical findings discussed earlier, it would be possible to use this text in addition for:

1. facilitating the generation of schemata (e.g the restaurant schema)
2. further work on 'structures of expectations' related to cultural stereotypes
3. further work on politeness conventions (e.g different types of apologies)

This cartoon is the first text in the unit, and as such it is used to introduce the theme of social stratification and language. In addition, it is also the introductory text for the whole set of units. Therefore, it was felt to be essential to select a text that is appropriate not only for introducing the theme

for this particular unit, but also the theme of culture as it relates to all the units. A cartoon was selected as an introductory text because:

1. a picture is more easily understood than a prose text and was therefore regarded as more suitable for getting the cultural theme across initially.

2. there is less likelihood of this type of text putting the learners off

This particular cartoon was regarded as suitable because:

1. it is a good illustration of the theme (social stratification and language)

2. it has scope for branching out into different areas -e.g social attitudes, cultural stereotypes and politeness conventions.

The most natural activity on looking at a picture is to try and make something of its meaning. Therefore, the first activity introduced in class is what was termed a cartoon recognition task in the original materials, but which could be better termed as a 'meaning construction task'. The cartoon is given to the learners without accompanying questions or exercises. The aim is to encourage learners to construct meaning based on the text (the cartoon) and the learners' background knowledge. The learners are expected to respond to visual clues; the furniture in the background, the clothes worn by the men and so on. Originally, the emphasis was to encourage learners to respond to the culture specific features depicted in the picture. The following prompts were used in the original materials to encourage meaning construction:

- What sort of place do the tables and chairs in the background remind you of?

- The man on the left has something in his coat pocket. What are these? Who uses such things? etc.

These prompts are helpful in providing clues to guide the learners towards recognizing the identity of the setting (restaurant) and the three men, if they have difficulty in deciding on these. Prompts are required only if they have such a difficulty. Once the learners have decided on their interpretation, it would be perhaps helpful to ask learners to state the different things in the

cartoon that caused them to arrive at these conclusions. It would be particularly important to find out whether the linguistic clues 'fully booked' and 'table for two' figured in their choice. An open-ended question such as:

- What things that you saw in the cartoon made you decide that the man in the middle is a head waiter in a restaurant?

might prove useful for eliciting this information. If the learners do not list these among their 'clues' their attention should be drawn to these expressions which would form part of the SL restaurant schema. Getting the learners to write down the key items that led them to decide on the restaurant setting would also prove helpful.

- e.g -chairs - tables - tablecloths - flowers - 'fully booked' - 'table for two' - evening (dining out) etc.

The second stage in the meaning construction involves the head waiter's contradictory replies. The prompts in the original deals with this satisfactorily.

The cultural stereotypes depicted in the cartoon are used in the original materials for introducing the cultural stereotypes through comparison with Sri Lankan culture. These stereotypes could be exploited further for drawing the learners' attention to the concept of 'structures of expectation' discussed in Tannen (1979:137). These expectations could be discussed in terms of Sri Lankan culture and in turn related to stereotypes. From this, it is possible to move on to stereotypes depicted in the cartoon and the 'structures of expectation' that goes with them. An open-ended question such as the following could be used to introduce this idea:

- What do you expect a farmer in a Sri Lankan village to look like? Sound like? A waiter in a 5 star hotel in Colombo? An ayruvedic physician? An astrologer?

The purpose of this discussion is to focus attention of the stereotypic images (cultural expectations) that members of a culture have of 'character types'. Next, it would be possible to discuss the cultural stereotypes in the cartoon in relation to SL expectations.

- According to to the stereotypes in the cartoon, what do

English speakers expect

* a working class man
* an upper class man
* a head waiter in a restaurant to look like? Sound like?

The fact that streotypes are 'exaggerations' could also be touched upon in the discussion, once again initially in relation to the learners' own culture.

- Do all farmers in Sri Lanka look like, sound like the typical farmer you described?
- What does this reveal about stereotypes?

In the original unit, the cartoon is also used for introducing a very important aspect of sociolinguistic knowledge -politeness features. The way in which this is done in the original unit is satisfactory, as in the trials, drawing attention to the head waiter's anomalous replies did lead to the learners' recognizing that both replies are *polite*. Therefore, the initial introduction to the concept of polite speech need no revision (see appendix 3.2, A155). The discussion featuring the introduction of the concept of politeness, the social reasons that underlie politeness -discussed in relation to the learners' MT- and the need to be both polite and appropriate is followed in the original unit by an activity in which the learners are provided an opportunity to learn situation specific politeness conventions in relation to a set of hypothetical situations which are however not far removed from the learners' experience. Since this activity also proved fruitful in eliciting responses from the learners and at the same time was useful for introducing prefabricated patterns such as:

'would you mind....'
'do you happen to...'
'will/would it be possible to...'
'I wondered whether...' etc.

this activity too does not need to be revised, but can be incorporated as it occurs in the original. The way in which this section on politeness features can be improved is by extending this section. In the original, politeness formulas were introduced in relation to the head waiter's explanation 'I'm afraid..'. The

learners' attention was drawn to the fact that this is understood as a formula by the hearer. In the trials, a prompt was used to draw the learners' attention to the formulaic nature of the statement:

- What does the head waiter mean when he says 'I'm afraid we are fully booked'?
- Can the man he addresses ask him 'Why are you afraid?' Why?

In the original unit, further examples of prefabricated patterns such as 'I don't think..', 'I have a feeling..', 'I am sorry but..', 'Yes, I would like to, but..'. 'It is very kind of you, but..' etc. were introduced. While the teacher needs to introduce some of these, others could be elicited from the learners. In the trials, the more fluent learners were able to produce a few of these formulas with prompting from the teacher. An activity for eliciting further formulas is included in the learners' worksheet (see appendix 3.1, A102-3) where hypothetical situations are presented to the learners, who as observers/analysts are asked to suggest 'solutions'. This activity too proved satisfactory in eliciting politeness formulae in the trials. It is also useful as it combines writing, as the learners are asked to write down the suggested responses. It is a painless writing activity as it does not involve great quantities of writing. A sample item is given below (for the full text see appendix 3.1, A102-3).

```
Newton's neighbour comes in while Newton is busy
weeding his garden.  Newton wants to get the weeding
done and then repair his bicycle.

Sam:  Thought I'll go to the cricket match this
      afternoon.  How about coming along?

Newton:
```

Since the activity proved useful in the trials, it seems worthwhile retaining it in the original form.

However, it is possible to make use of the opening provided by the formula in the head waiter's reply to introduce a wider variety of politeness formulae. From the expression of seeming regret -I'm afraid we are fully booked- it is possible to move on to apologies of different types. It would be possible to introduce these different types of apologies in relation to apology conventions

in the learners' MT. For example, it could be introduced by posing a problem for the learners to solve.

- In the cartoon, the head waiter expresses regret (that he does not necessarily feel) about not being able to comply with the working class man's request. How would this type of refusal be expressed in Sinhala?

- On the other hand, if you cause bodily hurt to somebody or cause damage to their property by accident, what would you say?

The point of discussing these hypothetical situations is to introduce the way in which *explanations* and *promise of repair/non-recurrence* form part of an apology in some cases. In Sinhala, very often, the apology consists only of an explanation or promise of repayment/repair/non-recurrence etc. An apologetic tone which is meant to soothe/pacify is used in expressing these explanations etc. Once the concepts of explanation, promise of repair have been introduced, it is possible to go on to discuss the way in which these concepts are vocalized in English. An activity in which the learners are asked to look at a set of examples and decide how each differs from the others in relation to context would be a satisfactory way of doing this.

- Look at the following expression:

1. I'm sorry
2. I'm sorry but I didn't mean to hurt you.
3. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.
4. Sorry we're late. The traffic was terrible.
5. I'm awfully sorry but I didn't see it in time. I will buy you a new one.
6. I'm dreadfully sorry. I didn't see you! Here, let me help you pick them up.
7. I'm sorry but how was I to know? I thought you liked him! I promise I won't invite him again.
8. I'm sorry (picking up books which had been accidentaly knocked down)

If the learners find this task difficult, the teacher should help by prompting the learners as to possible situations, but it would be most beneficial to try to encourage the learners to think up situations by themselves through discussion. Bringing in situations from the MT where an explanation would be more likely than a promise of non-recurrence and vice versa would also be useful in the way of prompts.

This activity could also be used to pinpoint the expressions of degree of regret/apology depending on damage, depending on whether the action was intentional or unintentional etc. This needs to be related to the situations suggested by the learners and discussed in groups. The different contexts in which item 1 and item 4 may occur would for example illustrate this point.

The points that need to be covered in relation to the degree/intensity of apology are:

1. intentionality/unintentionality
2. the seriousness of the offence/damage etc.
3. age and sex difference

5.5.1.2. Red Herring and Extract from The Collector:

These texts were used in the original unit to:

1. develop further the relationship between social stratification and language
2. develop further the way in which social attitudes are reflected in language
3. introduce idiomatic language and to demonstrate culture specific features of idiom use
4. provide opportunities for written language use

In the revised version, it is possible to make further use of these texts for:

1. planning writing by concentrating on meaning carrying lexical units
2. for developing structures of expectations

3. further opportunities for the use of discourse conventions

The theme of social stratification and language was substantially developed through the activities based on the first text. In constructing the meaning of *Red Herring* and the extract from *The Collector*, it would be helpful for the learners to make the thematic link. As these texts are meant to be used to develop this theme further, it becomes necessary to establish the thematic relationships. The method for establishing this thematic relationship in the original unit was a group discussion. This group discussion was linked with a writing activity in which each group was asked to produce a set of notes based on the discussion. This is one of the 'mini' writing activities that have been incorporated into the units to provide an opportunity for the learners to practice their writing skills. This activity would be revised in order to make it easier for the learners to do this task. This could be done by encouraging them to write 'notes' in skeleton form, concentrating on the meaning carrying lexical units instead of full sentences as they are likely to do.

- When you are making notes on the relationship between the texts, number these from 1 to *n*. Also, write down the ideas expressed by the group in the form of single words or phrases.

The teacher should demonstrate the way in which this should be done by joining each group in turn and overseeing the way in which the notes are written.

In the original unit, the notes made by the groups of learners about the thematic relationship between these texts and the cartoon that went before were used as the basis for discussing relationships between social stratification and language brought out in these two texts. The points to be covered in the class discussion which follows this group discussion are satisfactorily set out in the original unit and need no revision.

This section is also used in the original for the introduction of idiomatic usage. The presentation of this aspect of sociolinguistic knowledge by focussing the learners' attention on the last line of *Red Herring* 'between the devil and the deep cold sea' proved to be a successful way of introducing this aspect. The underlining and MC activities included in the original unit to promote learner recognition of idiomatic usage and their meanings proved

satisfactory at the trials. Therefore, these too can be retained without revision. the open-ended questions that were used to promote further discussion on the theme of social stratification and language in relation to the texts, also proved useful and are therefore retained.

The poem *Red Herring*, can be used as the basis of another activity which would be helpful in developing structures of expectations of the SL in the learners. As Widdowson points out (1983:37), literary discourse achieves its effects partly by being contrary to schematic expectations. The way in which literary discourse diverges from expectations and requires the generation of a schema specific to it can be demonstrated through this poem and this would in turn make it possible to bring to the learners' awareness the need to take the background into account in meaning construction. A line-by-line meaning construction task might prove to be an useful way of doing this. This activity needs to be attempted before the learners have heard or read the whole text. Therefore, it needs to be included before the worksheets with the text are given out.

The activity could be introduced by putting up the first line of the poem on the black board:

'My father was a working man'

The learners are next asked what they think would follow:

- What sort of information would you expect to follow such a statement?

In introducing this activity, it is not necessary to tell the learners that this statement comes from a poem. It would be best not to tell them anything about the text at this point. Once the learners express their expectations -e.g 'some more information about the father', 'what sort of working man', 'what the father does' etc.- the next line of the poem can be put up on the board:

'And a collier was he'

noting that this line meets with the reader expectations (answers the questions 'what sort of working man' etc.). The learners should be asked for further

guesses as to what follows. Possible answers would be 'more information about the father', 'what his work was like', 'what is a collier' etc. These should be followed by the next two lines:

At six in the morning they turned him down
And they turned him up for tea.'

The learners should then be asked to comment on the information, whether this information meets with their expectations, if not why not and so on. The whole poem could be treated line by line in this way, taking care not to turn it into a dissecting exercise. Instead, the learners should be encouraged to guess and the whole activity should be treated like a puzzle.

In all the discussions in both parts of the unit, it is necessary to encourage learners to use what discourse conventions they know and new conventions they were introduced to in the course of the activities. This in fact applies to all the discussions in all the units. This could be done by offering turns of speaking to learners, by providing such openings as '..... What do you think?', 'Do you agree with .....' etc., encouraging them to use conventions for expressing agreement/disagreement -e.g 'I don't quite see how', 'Yes, but ....', 'Don't you think it would be better ...' and so on. The teacher could also paraphrase learners' utterances in order to draw attention to the use of discourse conventions -e.g '..... thinks that you have not read it properly', '..... doesn't seem to agree' etc. From time to time, it would be useful to consciously draw the learners' attention to turn taking devices, conventions for interrupting, concluding a discussion, changing the subject and so on.

George Orwell's essay which was included as leisure time reading in the original, though thematically linked and useful in drawing attention to cultural features, was found to be too long a text for home reading as few learners actually read it at home. Therefore, this text could be omitted from the revised version.

5.5.2. Unit 2 – Travel and Holidays:

The theme of the second unit is travel and the relationship between travel and holidays. This theme is related to the activities aspect of the working definition of culture on which the materials are based. Originally this unit was called 'travel' but it has been renamed travel and holidays in this revised

version as it deals quite extensively with holidays. Since both the concept of travel and the concept of holiday means different things to English speaking society and Sinhala speaking society, the culture specific aspects of the theme were considered as being useful for introducing cultural information and related sociolinguistic conventions. In the trials using the original materials, the learners who took part in the experimental classes found this theme interesting and it also proved satisfactory for introducing cultural information and sociolinguistic conventions. Therefore, there is no reason for changing or discarding this theme in revising the materials.

Four texts were used as the basis for developing the teaching material illustrating the theme of travel and holidays: *The Foreign Hotel* and *The Stolen Corpse* -two modern legends, a cartoon and *The Travel Bug* -an article. In addition, *A Holiday At Home*, an anecdotal account of a holiday was given to the learners for leisure time reading. None of these texts proved to be difficult or lacking in interest at the trials. They also proved satisfactory in generating learner response and providing the nucleus for interesting classroom activities which were conducive to developing CA and providing opportunities for interaction and communication involving the learners linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge in the classroom. Therefore, the retention of all these texts in revising the materials seem to be justified. Apart from conveying culture specific information on travel and holidays, these texts were used for illustrating idiomatic usage, humour, register variations, discourse organization and cultural expectations in the form of cultural stereotypes. While these texts and the activities generated using the texts are quite satisfactory as they stand, it is possible to revise the unit in order to make better use of the scope afforded by these texts.

In making use of these texts for illustrating the way in which humour is generated in the SL, the way in which idioms are used and so on, and in order to develop procedural abilities, several different teaching techniques were made use of. These were attention focussing activities in the form of underlining, open-ended questions for generating discussions, reading, listening writing, cloze, picture reading and practice through discussion. While these techniques were fairly successful in the way they were used in the original materials, they could be revised in the light of the research findings in order to make them more effective.

5.5.2.1. Part 1 – Modern Legends:

In the original unit, the modern legends – *The Foreign Hotel* and *The Stolen Corpse* (see appendix 3.1, A111–13) were used for:

1. conveying cultural information on travel and holidays
2. introducing narrative techniques
3. a culture translation task

In the revised unit these texts could be additionally used for:

1. developing SL story schema
2. illustrating structures of expectations that underlie language perception and production
3. demonstrating the way in which text is derived from discourse and vice versa.

In the original, these legends were presented to the learners in the form of a cloze activity in order to encourage them to construct meaning from a text. The learners were expected to find the missing words by referring to the context. As discussed in 6.4.3.3, the cloze activities linked with listening were not as satisfactory as intended because of the tendency of the learners to regard these as 'exercises' and to concentrate their attention on writing down as many words as possible. These two legends on the other hand, were more successful as the learners did make an effort to find out the meaning of the text as a whole. This may be partly due to these texts being stories. In revising the materials perhaps it would be a satisfactory step not to limit these texts to the cloze activity, but to use one of the two texts for this activity and to use the other one for other types of activities. The first of the two legends – *The Foreign Hotel* – being longer and more complex than the other, has the potential to be used for some of the activities suggested by Morgan and Rinvolucri, discussed in 5.3. Therefore, by retaining the second modern legend and the activities based on it as they occur in the original, and by developing new activities based on the first legend, these texts could be put to better use.

Instead of presenting the story to the learners in the printed form, it is possible to narrate the story to the learners using a skeleton in the manner

suggested by Morgan and Rinvolucri (1983). This legend could be further made use of for developing the learners' SL story schema, and could be combined with a writing activity. In order to do this, it would be necessary to withhold part of the story -the second half- from the learners. Therefore, the first stage could be the narration of the first half of the legend using a story skeleton. The following story skeleton could be used for this purpose:

> - A mother and daughter travelling abroad - arrive at hotel - tired after long journey - mother particularly tired - put into adjoining rooms - daughter fell asleep at once - slept hard and long - did not wake till noon next day - opened door to mother's room - empty - not the same room - wallpaper, furniture different - bed made up - rang bell - no answer - dressed, went downstairs - asked where mother was from reception - women at reception desk asked 'what mother?' - insisted that daughter came alone - whenever she asked servants, same answer - daughter thought that she had gone mad - went back to England -

The purpose of narrating the story using such a skeleton instead of reading it straight off from a printed script is to expose learners to natural story telling in which story telling conventions in the oral form are used by the teacher. In this way, it would be possible for the teacher to provide a model for the learners to follow in story telling activities that they take part in, associated with the second legend in this unit.

The second stage in the activity is to invite the learners to ask questions about anything they do not understand in the story upto this point.

> - Do you understand the first half of the story that I have just told you? Is there anything that you don't understand?

Once the learners' problems have been clarified, the next stage of the activity could be introduced. For this activity the class could be divided into smaller groups. The different groups should be asked to work out what happens in the rest of the story. This should be done through a discussion within the groups. The learners should be encouraged to write a story skeleton of their own as part of the activity. At this point, a copy of the story skeleton used by the teacher for narrating the first half of the story should be given out to the learners. This activity would be useful in helping the learners to use their background knowledge and also their imagination. The instructions on how to

set about this task should be given verbally, instead of being included in the learners' worksheets.

> - Now that you have listened to the first half of this story, I would like you try and work out what the rest of the story is. You will have to try and guess what happens next. Discuss this problem in your group. Once you have made some guesses as to the way you think the story progresses, write it down in a skeleton form. In the sheet of paper you have just been given, you will find the 'skeleton' I used for telling you the first part of the story. You can follow a similar pattern in writing your story skeleton.

Once the different groups have completed their discussions and writing the story skeleton, a member of each group should be invited to narrate the group's version of the story using the skeleton. It would be useful to get a learner other than the one who wrote down the story skeleton to do the narration if possible.

These learners' versions will be very useful in eliciting their structures of expectations as to what would happen in a similar situation. For example, it is much more likely for Sri Lankan learners to expect the daughter to go to her relations -e.g uncles, cousins- for help than to go to her friends. It is also possible that they would think in terms of asking the authorities to investigate, instead of a friend/relation going over to do the investigating himself/herself. This activity would also be useful in encouraging learners to engage in story telling. Once the different groups have narrated their versions, it would be possible to organize a discussion on their versions of the story. Finally, a printed copy of the story as it stands should be given and comparisons made with their versions. The complete story is given below:

A lady and her daughter were travelling abroad, and arrived late at night, very tired after an exhausting journey at the hotel where they had booked their rooms. The mother was particularly worn out. They were put into adjoining rooms, and the daughter tumbled into bed and fell asleep at once. She slept long and hard, and it was well in the next day before she got up. She opened the door into her mother's room and found it empty. And it was not the room into which they had gone the night before. The wallpaper was different, the furniture was different, the bed was made up. She rang, and got no answer to her bell; she dressed and went downstairs.
'Can you tell me where my mother is?' she said to the women

at the desk.
'Your mother, mademoiselle?'
'Yes, the lady who arrived with me last night.'
'But, mademoiselle, you came alone.'
'We booked in; the night porter will remember; we wrote for two rooms!'
'Mademoiselle indeed wrote for two rooms, but she arrived alone.'
And whenever she asked among the servants she got the same answer, until she began to think that she must be mad. At last she went back to England and told her friends what had happened and one of them went to investigate. He went to the consul and police and at last he found out the truth.
The mother had been more than tired when she arrived that night, she had been in the invasion stages of cholera. No sooner had she gone to bed than she was taken violently ill; and the doctor was sent for, she died, and the hotel owners were filled with panic and decided to conceal all that had happened. The body was carried away, the furniture was taken out to be burnt, the wall re-papered, and all the staff were told to allow nothing to be guessed of what happened. They knew that not a guest would be left to them if it was known that cholera had been in the house.

In the course of the discussion, the teacher should draw attention to the story structure and the way in which this structure is developed and the different steps involved. The following stages should be covered:

1. characters introduced
2. their actions described
3. a problem introduced
4. the attempts to solve the problem described
5. a solution provided

It should also be pointed out to the learners that the story could not possibly end after the first part, as the reader is left without a solution to the problem. The learners should be encouraged to try and identify this structure in the next story they read, and how this second story is different as there is no possible solution.

The second legend could be introduced in the cloze format as in the original, with the learners (once again in groups) being asked to find out the missing pieces in the puzzle. Since all the learners will be looking at the same

story at the same time, instead of asking them to narrate the story it would be useful to ask each group to work out another story skeleton for narration outside the classroom. They should also be asked to identify the different stages in the structure of the story.

> - Now that you have worked out the missing links in the story, try to work out which bits of the story you need to remember if you wanted to tell this story to someone who does not know it. Decide on this by discussing the story within your group. One member of each group should write down the ideas of the group to form a story skeleton like the one you worked out the last time.

This activity could be useful in guiding learners as to how they should work out the gist of the text. It would also give them practice in deriving text from discourse and vice versa.

At the trials, it was found that the text - *The Foreign Hotel* was not suitable for the culture translation activity that was intended to be based on it, as it did not lend itself to such a task (see 6.4.3.3). Therefore, in the revised version, this activity should be dropped from the unit. This does not mean that this type of activity is valueless, as it would be a suitable activity to be based on a different type of text -e.g a text which is less controversial in relation to issues like moral values, factual information etc., and could be attempted in another unit.

5.5.2.2. Part 2 - Cartoon:

The cartoon in this unit (see 5.2.3.2) is used for developing further the theme of travel and holidays introduced in the previous section. In the original unit, this cartoon was used for the following:

1. the concept of holiday as understood in the learners' culture and the SL culture
2. cultural stereotypes
3. the relationship between western notions of holiday and the tourist industry in Sri Lanka
4. humour in the SL.

The culture specific information derived from this cartoon was conveyed

through a meaning recognition task of the same type as used for this purpose in the cartoon related activity in unit 1, part 1. The discussion used to introduce further information on cultural stereotypes and to enable learners to perceive humour are satisfactory. Though the activities using this text proved satisfactory, this text could be put to further use in achieving the CA goal in relation to:

1. culture specific schemata
2. structures of expectations

As pointed out in 5.3, and will be discussed further in 6.4.3.3, classroom observations revealed the way in which the learners were unable to perceive and/or tended to ignore minor details in pictures, which provide clues about the identity of the people, the place etc. Often, it is the culture specificity of these details that carry the meaning that is meant to be conveyed by a picture/cartoon. The way in which these details trigger off meaning may be related to the culture specificity of schemata. For example, for Britons, palm trees are more likely to belong to the tropics schema, whereas to the Sri Lankan it is likely to belong to the Sri Lanka (our homeland) schema. In the trials, the details in the cartoon which the learners failed to notice were spotlighted and attempts were made to help the learners to use these details –e.g the 'GB' plate, the palm trees, the thermos flask etc. in constructing meaning and appreciating the humour. A set of travel brochures were used together with this cartoon to provide further information about the western concept of travel and holidays. Cultural expectations were dealt with in the discussion of stereotypes and also the requirements catered for by travel agents. This aspect of structures of expectations should be further highlighted through other activities. It would be possible to do this through a word association task, where the learners are given key words and asked to express the different ideas the keywords generate in their minds. The learners could be prepared for this activity by the teacher discussing this beforehand and providing one or more examples as required.

- When someone mentions 'India' what are the different thoughts that come into your mind? What sort of pictures come into your mind? (Possible answers: shape, map, hinduism, buddhism, pilgrimages, silks, Gandhi, Buddhagaya etc.)

Next, the different keywords could be put up on the black board and learners asked to write down what they associate with each word. This task could be attempted individually.

Keywords: holiday, travel, car, picnic, tea,
coconut trees, seaside

Once the learners complete this task, it would be possible to examine the different learners' choices to see how much convergence and how much divergence in ideas there is between individuals. In the discussion it would be possible to draw attention to the universal properties of structures of expectations -e.g car = 4 wheels- in opposition to culture specific aspects of structures of expectations -e.g car = Sri numberplate- which is specific to Sri Lanka.

Apart from illustrating further the structures of expectations and how these at a practical level regarded as customer requirements are catered for by travel agents, the travel brochures could also be used to discuss our national image as we see it, and as we would have tourists see it.

The purpose of these discussions is partly to help learners to construct meaning in relation to cultural information in the SL, while at the same time they are also meant to facilitate the learners' use of the SL in the classroom; with special emphasis on sociolinguistic conventions. This should be constantly borne in mind and this goal should be furthered by making use of every opportunity that presents itself for unobstrusively instructing and assisting learners in the use of discourse conventions.

The writing task associated with the travel brochures should be retained.

5.5.2.3. Part 3 - The Travel Bug:

> Travel is the name of a modern disease which became rampant in the mid fiftees and is still spreading. The disease -its scientific name is *travelitis furiosis*- is carried by a germ called prosperity. Its symptoms are easily recognizable. The patient grows restless in the early spring and starts rushing about from one travel agent to another collecting useless information about places he does not intend to visit, studying prospectuses etc; then he, or usually she, will do a round of tailors, milliners, summer sales, sports shops, and spend three and a half times as

much as he or she can afford; finally, in August, the patient will board a plane, train, coach or car and proceed to foreign parts along with thousands of fellow sufferers, not because he is interested or attracted by the place he is bound for, nor because he can afford to go, but simply because he cannot afford not to go. The disease is highly infectious and nowadays you can catch Foreign Travel rather as you caught influenza in the twenties, only more so.

The result is that in the summer months (and in the last few years also during the winter season) everybody is on the move....

What is the aim of all this travelling? Each nationality has its own different aim with it. The Americans want to take photographs of themselves a) in *Trafalgar Square*, with the pigeons; b) in *Piazzo San Mario*, Venice with the pigeons; and c) in front of the *Arc de Triomphe*, in Paris without pigeons. The idea is simply to collect documentary proofs that *they have been there.*

The German travels to check up on his guide books: when he sees the *Ponte de Rialto* is really at its proper venue, that the Leaning Tower is in its appointed place in Pisa and is leaning properly as promised, he ticks these things in his guide-book and returns home with the gratifying feeling that he has not been swindled. But why do the English travel?

First, because their neighbour does and they have caught the fever from him. Secondly, they used to be taught that travel broadens the mind, and although they have by now discovered the sad truth that whatever travel may do to the mind, Swiss and German food certainly broadens other parts of the body the old notion still lingers on. But lastly -and perhaps mainly- they travel to avoid foreigners. Here in our cosmopolitan England, one is always exposed to the danger of meeting all sorts of peculiar aliens. Not so in one's journeys in Europe -if one manages these things intelligently. I know many English people who travel in groups, stay in hotels where even the staff is English, eat roast beef and Yorkshire pudding on Sundays and Welsh rarebit and steak and kidney pudding on weekdays, all over Europe. The main aim of the Englishman abroad is to meet people; I mean of course, nice English people from next door or from the next street. Normally one avoids one's neighbours ('It is best to keep yourself to yourself'- 'We leave others alone and want to be left alone', etc.) If you meet your next door neighbour in the High Street or at your front door you pretend not to see him or, at best, nod cooly; but if you meet him in Capri or Granada, you embrace him fondly and stand him a drink or two; and you may even discover that he is quite a nice chap after all and both of you might have just as well stayed at home in Stockton-on-Trent.

This text is meant to complement the cartoon discussed earlier, as this article

provides insights into some of the issues raised in earlier discussions. it was used in the original for:

1. conveying cultural information on travel and holidays
2. discussing further examples of cultural stereotypes
3. discussion of culture specific behaviour and habits
4. listening and reading activities
5. examining language specific humour
6. examining rhetorical conventions such as register variation
7. examining culture specific aspects of humour

Though some of the activities based on this text were successful as discussed in 6.4.3.3, the learners found verbal humour particularly difficult. However, discarding this text seems a waste, as on one hand it did serve some of the intended purposes in the trials and also as verbal humour is a problem for ESL learners and since it is both an interesting and useful part of sociolinguistic knowledge of the SL, ways and means should be found to try and solve the problem. Discarding a text which is a good example of verbal humour does not seem the right way to set about solving this problem. The activities based on this text in the original unit were useful in providing some information about travel and holidays, in providing opportunities for discussion and making it possible to introduce rhetorical conventions such as register variation. It is felt that in revising the unit, attention should be focussed on the ways of making the verbal humour in the text accessible to the learners.

This article uses a variety of techniques for creating a humorous effect:

1. the use of the 'mock serious' (para. 1)
2. the use of trivial detail as profound truths (para. 3)
3. the juxtaposition of unrelated things to create a humorous effect –e.g broadening the mind and broadening the body (para. 4)
4. presenting in a serious tone 'facts' which would not normally occur –e.g travelling to foreign countries to avoid foreigners (para. 5)

5. the organization in point form –firstly, secondly, lastly etc. and thus giving the 'facts' a ring of authenticity.

In each case, it is the incongruity between style and content –e.g serious prose register and non-serious content in para 1, or the yoking together of incompatible concepts –e.g broadening the mind and broadening the body, presenting the impossible as possible – travelling to foreign lands to avoid foreigners, that evokes humour. All these different aspects could be regarded as being part of the humour schema in English. Incongruity as the root of humour can be regarded as universal, and as such, part of the universal humour schema, but the way this incongruity manifests itself can be culture specific. One way of helping the learners to appreciate humour is to enable them to recognize incongruity when they see it and to relate it to the humour schema. Discussing incongruity in relation to the MT and the way in which this creates humour in the MT may be a satisfactory way of approaching this problem. Humour created through cartoons could once again be referred to for this purpose. An open-ended question could be used for introducing the new topic:

- When we discussed the cartoon in the last unit, we also discussed stereotypes of traders, politicians etc. If you recall the stereotype of the blackmarketeer, what was the most prominent feature of this stereotype? Why? etc.

The purpose of this discussion is to focus attention of the larger than life exaggerations of physical features, items such as cigars, hats, walking sticks etc. associated particularly with the stereotypic image of politicians and the way in which in each case the incongruity evokes laughter. Once the learners have absorbed this idea, *The Travel Bug* could be introduced as outlined in the original unit, as a listening task, where the text is read aloud to the learners in the tone intended by writer. This is followed by getting the learners to read the printed text, also as set out in the original. In the original, a humour and word association task follows this. This could be revised to include a meaning construction task with guidelines from the teacher in which the learners' attention is drawn to the relationship between incongruities and humour as it occurs in the text. However, it would be desirable to find out whether the learners find the text humorous without aid from the teacher before this activity is launched. An open-ended question testing merely comprehension

would be sufficient for this purpose:

- What do you think is the writer's purpose in writing this article?

The activity that follows should be developed on the basis of the learners' answers. In the case of the learners failing to perceive the humour (as it happened with many of the learners who took part in the trials), then, strategies for enabling learners to 'see' the humour should be employed. As the different paragraphs employ different tactics for evoking laughter, the text may be discussed a paragraph at a time.

- Look very carefully once again at the first paragraph of this text. What is this paragraph about? What do you think is the most important word in the paragraph?

The learners should be guided by questions and prompts to select 'travel' as the keyword. Since this topic has been the chief topic of discussion in this unit, this should not be too difficult. Once the learners arrive at the keyword, they should be encouraged to think and speak in terms of the travel schema that has been introduced already.

- Last time we talked about travel what did we decide as being a Sri Lankan's idea of travel? A British person's idea of travel?
- Now, since the paragraph is about travel, what could we possibly expect the writer to say about travel? What does he actually say?
- Is this related in any way to the stereotype of the blackmarketeer? Why? How? etc.

Whether all these questions need to be put to the learners in the course of the discussion would depend on whether the learners are quick on the uptake or not. In fact, it would be best to attempt this activity with smaller groups of learners and not the whole class. While the teacher is engaged with one group of learners, discussing this aspect of the text, the other group of learners could be engaged in the other activities given in the learners' worksheets (see appendix 3.1, A116). These activities need not be revised as they did prove useful in the trials. The third and fifth paragraphs of the text should be

examined for humour evoking incongruity in the same way. The questions that could be used to focus learner attention on these different aspects are:

- para. 3: What are the main 'facts' that the writer tries to convey in this paragraph?
- para. 5: What does travel do to the mind according to the text? What does this mean?

As the learners find verbal humour in the SL difficult, a great deal of guidance from the teacher is needed if learners are to be able to construct a humorous meaning from this text. Though it would take time to discuss this text with each group in turn for the purpose of helping the learners to recognize and appreciate the humour, this seems a worthwhile exercise if it contributes to the patterned generation of SL schemata. In order to be able to guide each group in turn, the teacher could discuss the incongruities that evoke humour in the first paragraph in detail, give the learners the leading question for para. 2 and then move on to the next group.

Though time consuming, this activity seems worthwhile because its purpose is not merely helping the learners to recognize and appreciate the humour in this particular text, but hopefully also in other humorous texts.

A Holiday At Home which is an uncomplicated humorous text was not found difficult by the learners and should therefore be retained for leisure reading in the revised unit.

As in the case of all discussions, the discussions in this unit too should be used for promoting the use of sociolinguistic conventions. This may be difficult in relation to the discussions on *The Travel Bug* as it would be necessary to concentrate on the content. In the case of the other texts in the unit, this would not prove a problem.

5.5.3. Unit 13 – Advertisements:

Advertising is the theme of the thirteenth unit. This theme once again is related to the activities aspect of the working definition of culture forming the basis of the cultural themes. Writers of advertisements exploit cultural expectations, cultural values, cultural attitudes etc. in order to engage the interest and the attention of people who view/listen to/read their

advertisements. While the values upheld by society are reflected in advertising, advertisements in their own way tend to influence society and the language used by society. Popular catch phrases from the advertisements enter day to day language use of the society exposed to these advertisements. Thus, catch phrases such as 'drink a pint a milk a day' or 'beans means Heinz' become part of the socio-cultural awareness of the native speaker.

Originally this unit was used to discuss:

1. the relationship between social values and advertisements
2. the influence advertisements have on current usage
3. the advertising register

The learners who took part in the trials responded well to the texts used in the unit -an advertisement by British Airways for cabin crew recruitment, a set of advertisements for academic jobs and an advertisement for face cream. The two main activities concentrated on in this unit were discussions in which the culture specific features were brought to the learners' awareness consciously and writing activities in which the learners were encouraged to make use of advertising and planned discourse conventions. The discussions were successful in bringing the features of the SL advertising register to the learners' awareness. The writing activities on the other hand were not successful. Therefore, in the revised unit it would be beneficial to:

1. retain the theme of the unit
2. retain the texts
3. retain the organization of the discussion as it occurs in the original unit
4. revise the writing activities in the light of discourse research findings
5. include more work with advertisements in the MT
6. use the material for some work on indirect speech acts

5.5.3.1. Part 1 – Job Advertisements:

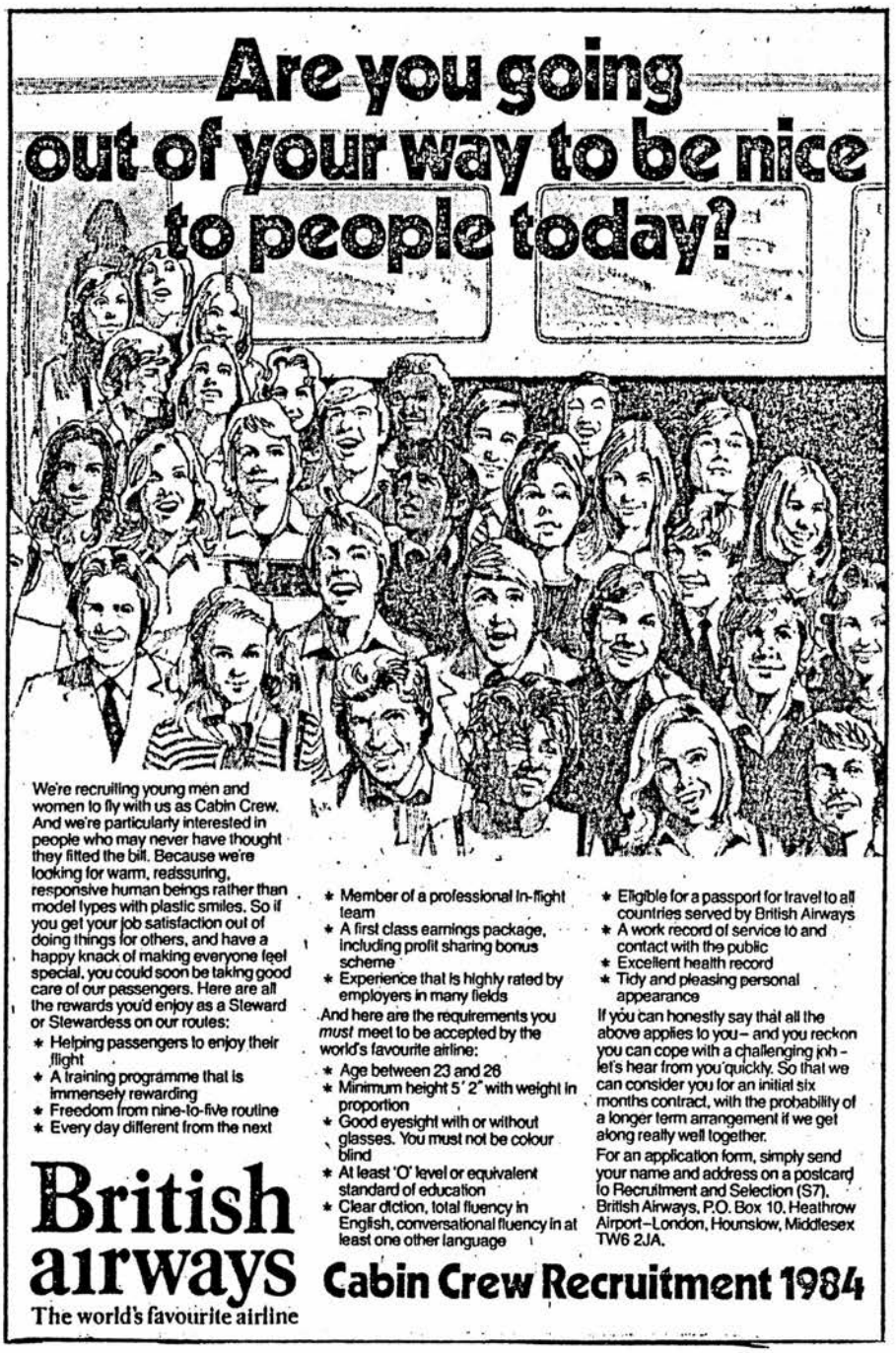
In the original unit, these advertisements (see appendix 3.1, A148-49) were used for several purposes: to illustrate

1. the advertising register
2. the economical use of language in advertisements
3. means used for creating reader appeal

and to provide opportunities for learners to use this knowledge in writing tasks, where they are asked to write an advertisement and a response to an advertisement.

As discussed briefly earlier in the chapter (5.4.2.3) and as will be discussed further in 6.4.3.3, the writing activities were the least satisfactory of the classroom activities. Writing activities form an important part of this unit because the texts in this unit lend themselves particularly well for writing activities. In revising this unit, it is this area that need to be particularly concentrated on. The discussion activities used for consciously introducing the advertising register and cultural information could be retained as they occur in the original.

As discussed in 5.4.1.3, one of the ways of improving the learners' ability to produce and comprehend planned discourse is to make them aware of the role of the reader/listener and to encourage them to write with the reader/listener in mind, foreseeing their reaction. The first advertisement used here (the BA advertisement for cabin crew recruitment given below) would be particularly helpful for this purpose as this advertisement is written with the reader firmly in view, and this would make it easier to focus attention on this aspect.



It would be possible to introduce the concept of planned discourse by a preliminary discussion in which the mechanics of planned discourse are discussed. A hypothetical situation could be used for this purpose and the proposition discussed in a general class discussion.

- Prompt: Can you think of any situation where you would need to think and plan carefully about what you must say in order to win your listener to your way of thinking?

- Possible situations could include: approaching ones parents' for financial help over and above what they normally provide, asking permission to do something normally disapproved, trying to win approval for some project etc. -basically any situation where it is essential to win the listener over to one's way of thinking.

The process involved in planning this type of discourse can be developed next.

- In such a situation how would you set about planning what to say?

- Points to be covered:

    1. foresee objections that will be raised

    2. foresee questions that will be asked

    3. think of counter objections and valid answers to 1 & 2 above

The concept of reader centredness found in writing could be next introduced using the prompts used in the original unit:

- In the BA advertisement, explicit reference is made to the reader: you. Can you find similar references in the other advertisements?

This is in order to highlight the differences between this advertisement and the advertisements for high ranking academic jobs that form the second text; advertisements which do not attempt to persuade in quite the same way. The reader centredness of this advert could be further exploited in order to encourage learners to see this tendency in planned discourse, and also to aid them to organize their own planned discourse by visualizing the recepient of the discourse.

As an initial step, the learners could be asked to examine the different features of the reader centredness of this text. A cue such as the following in addition to the prompt given above would prove helpful:

- Look at the statements made in the advertisement and work out the type of questions that you might ask about this job, that BA try to answer in the statements they make.

This could be done as group work, with the teacher joining each group in turn and giving what assistance the learners need.

In the original unit, a writing activity follows this activity, and it would be satisfactory to follow the same pattern in the revised unit. What needs to be changed is the way in which the learners are asked to approach the activity. In the original the learners are divided into two groups and are given instructions to proceed with the two writing tasks:

- Group A: designing an advertisement
- Group B: writing an answer to an advertisement requesting further particulars and application forms (see appendix 3.1, A150)

These writing activities should be retained, but the learners should be given different guidelines for proceeding with the tasks. The following instructions should be substituted for the information that is given in the original unit.

- Group A: Before you write your advertisement, write out a plan for the advertisement. Think of the type of people who would want to be tour guides for the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. What sort of questions are they likely to ask about the job? Discuss this point in your group and make a note of all the questions that you can think of.
- Group B: In writing a reply to the advertisement you have selected, think about the information that the person receiving the letter would want to know. As a first step write down these questions.

The teacher could join each group in turn and assist them in thinking out these questions, but it is essential to encourage them to do the thinking and discussing by themselves as a group. The information included in the learners' worksheet originally, should instead be included in the teachers' notes to be used in case the learners find it difficult to think of the right questions.

Once the two groups have decided on their questions they should be asked to provide the answers which would form the body of the advertisement/letter,

keeping in mind that in the case of the advertisement, this information should be employed in order to persuade and in the case of the letter, to set out the request accurately and precisely.

Instructions

- Group A: Now that you have worked out the questions that prospective applicants are likely to ask, work out the answers to these questions and use this information in writing out your advertisement, keeping in mind that you need to *persuade* these people to apply. Look at your copy of the BA advertisement once again and see how this is done by the writer of this advertisement.

- Group B: Now that you have worked out the information that the person receiving your letter would expect to find in the letter, use this information to write your letter, keeping in mind that you are required to to make your request clear.

5.5.3.2. Part 2 – Commercial Advertisements:

In the original unit, a set of commercial advertisements including the Anne French advertisement (see appendix 3.1, A151) were used to discuss:

1. culture specific features revealed in the advertisements (e.g values upheld by society)

2. types of commercial advertisements in the SL

The method employed to introduce commercial advertisements by getting learners to look at a whole range of advertisements offering goods and services was particularly helpful in focussing attention on the different types of commercial advertisements. The scope of the preliminary discussion on commercial advertisements could be broadened to include the concept of cultural expectations in relation to advertisements. An additional prompt such as:

- Why do advertisements assume that claiming their products would make users attractive, successful etc. would be likely to attract customers?

would be helpful in making it possible to link cultural expectations with advertisements.

For the second part of the activity in which the learners are given the Anne French advertisement with the final 7 lines omitted and asked to look at the text and decide:

1. the source of the text
2. the missing lines

could be retained as this activity proved useful in the trials leading to further discussion on features of commercial advertisements in English and cultural features underlying these. It would be possible to make further use of this text to include some work on speech acts as discussed in 5.4.1.2. Though this advertisement is clearly meant to convey the message 'buy this product' it is not directly stated at any point. This fact could be brought to the learners' notice consciously.

> – We decided that the text that you have just examined is an advertisement for Anne French cleansing lotion. Look at this text again and see whether it asks the reader to buy this product. How do we know this is an advertisement?

After introducing this concept of indirectness, it is possible to get the learners to examine the selection of commercial advertisements they looked at earlier, paying special attention to this feature.

In discussions arising out of the texts in the original unit, comparisons were made with advertising in the learners' MT. Indirect imperatives in advertising should also be discussed in relation to the MT in the course of this discussion.

5.6. Conclusions

This chapter attempted to outline and discuss in some detail the lesson materials developed on the basis of the theoretical concepts discussed in the chapters that went before. When the original materials were developed the researcher was dependent on the insights provided by these theories and her past experience of working with ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. In examining methods of improving the materials and in revising these sample units, the researcher was able to make use of insights from findings in other areas of research such as schema theory and also from the classroom observations made during field research in Sri Lanka. The field experiment that provided these insights will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

FIELDWORK AND OUTCOMES

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research design and to describe the different stages of the field work related to this investigation carried out at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, during the period 03-04-1984 - 20-06-1984. The research design is outlined in 6.2 and the procedures followed, the instruments and the subjects are described. The different stages in the administration of the experiment are described in detail; the pre and post tests are described in section 6.2.2.1. The results of the pre and post tests are interpreted and discussed (6.3). The teaching experiment is outlined (6.4) and the observations made during the experiment and insights gained from it are discussed in detail (6.4.3). In 6.5, observations made and the insights gained by administering the experiment are presented.

6.2. The Research Design

Taking into account the theoretical concepts discussed in chapters 3 and 4, a research project was designed and a pre test post test teaching/testing experiment was set up to test the hypotheses outlined in 1.5. A pre test post test experimental design was selected as being the most suitable for testing rigorously the effectiveness of the teaching materials in promoting a CA goal. It was decided to adopt the following procedure to investigate the relationship between CA and CC, and in turn CA and sociolinguistic competence in ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka.

1. To design a set of teaching materials for increasing the learners' CC by improving sociolinguistic competence through making learners aware of the cultural features underlying the SL, incorporating the teaching techniques used for teaching culture specific material described in 4.5.

2. To establish the level of CC of a group of tertiary level advanced/intermediate ESL learners at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, and to investigate whether there was a marked difference in their level of sociolinguistic competence as opposed to their linguistic competence, by administering a valid test of CC.

3. Having established their level of CC, to select half of this group of learners by means of random selection, for special

treatment.

4. The group thus selected to be taught for a period of six weeks in experimental classes using the teaching material designed to improve sociolinguistic competence which would in turn lead to increased CC.

5. At the end of the period of experimental teaching, to post test the experimental and control groups in order to investigate

    a. whether the teaching materials designed for the purpose of improving sociolinguistic competence through CA were satisfactory for this purpose.

    b. Whether the experimental group who received special treatment show a marked difference in their performance in the test of CC as opposed to the control group, in the test as a whole, and in sections testing sociolinguistic competence in particular.

6.2.1. Procedures:

6.2.1.1. The Instruments:

The instruments used in this experiment were as follows:

1. A modified version of the test of CC developed and tested by Lyle F. Bachman of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Adrian S. Palmer of the University of Utah. This test was used for the first and third stages of the experiment: the pre test and post test. Three parts of Bachman and Palmer's test; the Multiple Choice Test, The Writing Sample Test and the Self Rating Test and Questionnaire were used. The fourth part, the Oral Test had to be omitted because of the practical difficulties involved in conducting an oral test of the length and complexity of this test. Though the seriousness of dropping the oral test was realized, the practical difficulties made it impossible to retain it. The option of designing a simple oral test to replace it in the experiment was not considered because:

    a. it was decided from the outset not to make any drastic changes in Bachman and Palmer's tests, because this would make comparison difficult.

    b. of the difficulty of making this a compatible component, because of time constraints and because it would need extensive pilot testing.

c. The time required to complete the three components that were used made it seem unwise to extend this amount of time by adding yet another component.

The three parts that were used, were modified to suit the Sri Lankan context. These modifications and the basis for these modifications will be discussed in the third section of this chapter.

2. A set of teaching materials designed by the researcher, discussed in chapter 5.

6.2.1.2. The Subjects:

The subjects who took part in this experiment were 58 undergraduates in the faculties of arts and law at the University of Colombo. Three different groups took part in the experiments. See Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Subjects Who Took Part in the Experiment Grouped According to Faculty, Academic Year, Age, Sex and Proficiency Level

Fac.	Year	No.	Sex F	Sex M	Prof. Level	Age Range	Aver. Age
Law	1	40	19	21	3	19-25	21.1
Arts	1	08	05	03	4*	19-30	21.1
Arts	3	10	07	03	4**	21-26	22.4
Tot.		58					

Fac. = Faculty Tot. = Total
* Year 1 of the two year certificate course in English
** year 2 of the two year certificate course in English

All 58 students belonging to these three groups took part in the first stage of the experiment: the pre test. Half this number (28 students) were picked by random selection[1] to take part in the second stage: the teaching experiment. 14 men and 14 women from the three groups made up the experimental group. See Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Composition of the Experimental Group According to Syllabus Group and Sex

Syllabus Group	Number	Sex	
		F	M
1 (law 1)	19	09	10
2 (arts 1)	04	02	02
3 (arts 3)	05	03	02
Total	28	14	14

The control group was made up of the other half.

Though it was the researcher's intention to administer the post test to the entire group of 58 who took part in the pre test, this was not possible due to practical difficulties. 33 of the 58 subjects from the original group took part in the third stage of the experiment. Of these 21 students belonged to the experimental group and 12 to the control group. See Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 The Breakdown of the Experimental and Control Groups for the Post Test According to Subject Group and Syllabus Group

Syllabus Group	Subject Group		Total
	Experimental	Control	
1 (law 1)	13	07	20
2 (arts 1)	03	03	06
3 (arts 3)	05	02	07
Total	21	21	33

In administering the experiment some changes had to be made in the original plan and one of the areas in which there was a major change, was in the composition of the sample. The researcher had hoped to pick her sample from

among undergraduates of the faculty of arts following the certificate course in English. According to the 1981 figures, around 175 - 200 students registered for this course. Going on these figures the researcher was quite sure of being able to get a sample of 80 out of this number for the experiment. These figures had undergone changes during the years 1981 - 1984. The present number of students registered for the course were far below the 175 mark, and out of these the number who actually attended classes even sporadically were even fewer. The average attendance during 1981 in these classes which numbered 15 - 20 was down to 6 - 12 in the first three months of 1984. This seem to be due to several reasons.

- The number of students who register for this course on passing level 3 had reduced in number.

- The majority of students who had registered for the course were not following classes.

- Since they are pressed for time to complete the syllabuses in their academic fields, they seem to give low priority to attending these English classes which are optional and do not affect their academic qualification. Even though there is a lot of pressure to spend their English class hours coping with other academic work, in the case of the lowest level (level 1) the students continue to attend classes, because in order to get their degree they have to pass level 1.

- The certificate course qualification was and still is regarded as a means to a better job. Since most students begin applying for jobs in their final year, students in the past felt that it was their final opportunity to get an English qualification approved by prospective employers. This situation has changed somewhat since 1981. The department of English of the university has launched an English course for employed men and women. Students who are under pressure from their academic work, now feel that even if they are unable to complete the certificate course, they could always come back and join the careers course. Though in the normal way many students still wish to gain this extra qualification at the same time as their degree, the availability of an option such as Careers English may also be a reason for their giving low priority to the certificate course in English, when pressurized by academic work, because of strikes and closures which have shortened the academic year.

- It is a general trend that the students who get into the certificate course are those who also do well in their academic work. Because of the competition for jobs among graduates, some of these students do a technical course or some other outside examination while studying for their degree. Since this involves a great deal of hard work,

> students are sometimes compelled to miss some of their lectures and tutorials at the university. English is one of the subjects that they can easily afford to miss as it is optional for most of them, so, English classes are often affected by this too.

Due to these reasons the researcher found that it was impossible to get even a sample of 40 from among the certificate course students. Therefore, some other alternative had to be found. All the students belonging to different years were scheduled to begin their end of year examinations in August, and from among these it was necessary to find some who were the least pressurized. On the other hand, it was also necessary to find a group who would at least be fairly close in proficiency to the certificate course students. This was essential as the materials for the teaching experiment had been designed with these students in view.

Therefore, after consultation with the Head and senior members of the department of English, it was decided to make use of as many certificate course students as were willing to volunteer, and to make up the rest by selecting a group from among the first year level three students, from the faculty of law. They were considered as being the most suitable as they were a large group (45 students), and they were at proficiency level 3, which was the level just below certificate course (level 4). Since they were first year students, and had also completed most of their own English syllabus, it was felt that they would respond better than some of the other groups.

6.2.2. Administration of the Experiment:

The entire experiment covering the period 03-04-84 - 20-06-84 was of 21/2 months duration, but the time spent on the project was reduced as there were two short vacations and several national holidays during this period. Details are given in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 The Different Stages of the Investigation

Syll. Group	Dates of Pre Test	Dura. of Pre Test (hrs)	Dura. Teach. Exp.	No of Sess-ions	Dura. of Sess-ions (hrs)	Attd. Range	Date of Post Test	Dur. of Post Test (hrs)
1	4-5- 5-5	3 3	25-5- 3-6	17	2	3-19	18-6 19-6	3 3
2	4-4- 5-4	2.5 2.5	30-4- 12-6	17	2	2-4	18-6 19-6	2.5 2.5
3	3-4- 4-4-	1.5 1.5	1-5- 12-6	10 02	1 2	3-5	19-6 20-6	2.5 2.5

Syll. = Syllabus Dura. = Duration
(hrs) = Hours Attd. Range = Attendance Range

6.2.2.1. The First and Third Stages of the Experiment:

6.2.2.1.1. Introduction to Bachman and Palmer's Test of Communicative Competence:

As stated above, the pre test and the post test were based on the test of CC developed by Bachman and Palmer (See Appendices 1.1, 1.3, 1.4). This test sets out to investigate three distinctive traits: grammatical competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence, which are posited as components of CC. The test follows a multitrait-multimethod design, in which each of these hypothesized traits is tested using four methods: an oral interview, a writing sample, a multiple choice test and a self rating test. In addition there is also a questionnaire to elicit demographic information.

The subjects for Bachman and Palmer's original experiment were selected from among non-native speakers of English in the USA. The sample they used were 116 non-native speakers of English from the Salt Lake City area. Their definition of CC and the criteria for a valid test of CC that forms the theoretical basis for the test are discussed in Bachman and Palmer (1982:449-465), and in 3.4.2 of this thesis.

This test was selected as a suitable instrument for the first and third stages

of the experiment for the following reasons:

1. The principles on which Bachman and Palmer have based their test are substantially related to the theoretical basis on which this investigation is based, as their concept of CC is influenced by the model of CC developed by Canale and Swain which in turn is similar to Hymes' concept of CC in relation to grammatical and sociolinguistic competencies which are considered the components of CC in this thesis.

2. This test could be regarded as a valid research instrument because it has been pilot tested and subsequently tested using a large sample.

3. The population that came under study in Bachman and Palmer's project have certain similarities to the population under study in this project, in that both groups are non-native users of English.

4. Since designing a test of CC is an undertaking in its own right, to launch such a project in addition to the project at hand in the limited time available would be impractical and therefore inadvisable.

5. The possibility of being able to compare the findings of the present investigation with the one that has gone before is an added advantage.

As mentioned earlier Bachman and Palmer's test consists of four parts, and of these only three parts were used in this experiment. The first part, the Multiple Choice Test (MCT hereafter) is made up of two sections, with 69 items in the first section and 50 items in the second section. The Writing Sample Test (WST hereafter) is also made up of two sections, with 2 items in the first section and 4 items in the second section. The Self Rating Test (SRT hereafter) consists of 24, four point Likert type scales. In addition, the subjects were also given a questionnaire, in which they were requested to give demographic information about themselves, about the conditions under which they learn and use English and their reasons for learning English.

6.2.2.1.2. The Revised Version of the Bachman and Palmer Test:

Though formulated for the purpose of testing CC, it was not possible to use Bachman and Palmer's test in its original form for the purpose of this experiment. There were several reasons for this. Bachman and Palmer's test while keeping in mind the ultimate purpose of testing CC was at the same time

devised for testing the CC of a particular population -non-native speakers of English in the USA. Therefore, certain parts of the test -e.g. the SRT and the questionnaire- were aimed at this population. In using the test with a different population, it was necessary to make adjustments to make it suitable for the new population.

The second area in which it was necessary to make changes was in relation to items testing sociolinguistic competence. While some of the items which tested sociolinguistic competence -e.g questions on register and questions on using non-literal language- were common to both groups, there were others which were specific to speakers of American English, as these set out to test features of American culture. Some of the *nativeness* questions fell into this category. Since Sri Lankan speakers are influenced by British English, it was necessary to make certain alterations in these items. However, every effort was made not to alter the test too much, as this would make it difficult to compare the two tests, and what this experiment could gain from such a comparison would be lost.

The revisions that were made were of two types:

1. those items that were considered as irrelevant to the Sri Lankan sample were omitted.

2. Those items which contained words or allusions specific to American English (AE hereafter) and American culture were changed and British English (BE hereafter) forms substituted.

Most of the items that were irrelevant occurred in the SRT and the questionnaire and some changes also became necessary in the MCT. The section that needed the least amount of revision was the WST.

The revisions were based on the experience of the researcher as a Sri Lankan speaker of English and a teacher of English in Sri Lanka, and on the observations of a few British speakers of English and a few Sri Lankan speakers of English. Any item that the researcher felt was specific to AE was checked with both the British speakers and a group of Sri Lankan speakers of English. The British speakers who helped the researcher were staff and students of the Department of Applied Linguistics, of the University of Edinburgh and the Sri Lankan speakers were staff of the Department of English of the University of

Colombo.

These two groups were asked whether a certain word or expression formed a part of their repertoire and whether it was acceptable to them. In 98% of the cases there was consensus between the two groups about the use and acceptability of these words and expressions.

A fairly large number of revisions became necessary in the SRT and the questionnaire. In many of the items in this section there were specific references to studying in the United States (item 18), associating with American people (item 19), the speech of Americans (items 38, 53) and well known people and places in America (items 39, 47). These items were omitted as they were irrelevant to the Sri Lankan context. Some of the items which were retained needed minor alterations. Twelve items were omitted from the SRT and the questionnaire reducing the total number of items from 57 to 45.

Most of the items that needed revision in the SRT and the questionnaire were of a factual nature, while most of the items that had to be revised or omitted in the MCT were to do with cultural awareness specific to the American speaker. In section 1 of the MCT no changes were necessary, while quite a number of revisions were necessary in the second half. The number of questions were reduced by 3; the total from 50 to 47. A few changes were made in the general instructions, as well as in the specific instructions in relation to certain sections of the test. Words specific to American usage -e.g gas pedal (item 72), one way or round trip (item 75), tex (item 80) and 'Chicken Little' and 'Little Eva' in the MCT, Mason-Dixon Line and lye in the WST- were changed either to standard BE forms or to the equivalents in BE. For details of the revisions see appendix 1.5.

At the post test it was felt that it would be irrelevant to give out the questionnaire which elicited demographic information. Therefore, only the SRT was administered.

6.2.2.2. Preliminary Observations on the First and Third Stages of the Experiment:

In both the pre test and the post test, subjects tended to take the MCT more seriously than the other two parts. It is possible that they regarded the MCT as being more useful to them, as part of their own English tests are of

this type. It may also be due to the MCT being given before the other sections. At the post test stage when subjects expressed their disappointment that it was the 'same test', the MCT still seemed to absorb them.

The worst response was to the WST where some of the items were not attempted at all. This was specially the case at the post test. In answering the SRT some of the subjects had difficulty making up their minds as to what their ratings were. Bachman and Palmer's grading of the MCT items and the vocabulary items in the WST were justified by the responses of the Sri Lankan sample. The first few items were found to be easy by the majority, and as they worked their way through the test the weaker subjects had great difficulty with the latter items in each of the multiple choice sections, and the vocabulary section of the WST. For example all the subjects were able to make sentences with or define 'car' and 'book' (items 1 & 2 of the vocabulary section of the WST) and none of them were able to define or make a sentence with 'exacerbate' (item 15) correctly. Items 11 - 15 in the vocabulary list were difficult for most of the subjects. Most subjects also found the second half of the MCT more difficult than the first half. Most subjects spent a longer time over tests E and F in the MCT. They also spent more time doing the second half of the MCT.

Another problem encountered by the Sri Lankan subjects was the long time they needed just to read and understand the instructions in the test booklet. Most of them are slow readers and reading the instructions took up a great deal of time. Often it was necessary for the researcher to give them instructions oraly in a simplified form. This is one reason why some subjects took longer to complete the tests. It was not merely because they found the test items difficult. Even with the researcher directing them as they went along, it was not certain whether they always understood the directions. For example some subjects had not answered item 31 in the SRT which asked:

'What kind of English do you know better? Spoken English or Written English?'

This item is crucial for answering items 32 - 44 correctly, as the instructions state:

'Please answer questions 32 - 44 for *that kind of English*'

(emphasis mine).

The subjects who did not answer item 31 did go on to answer questions 32 - 44. Therefore, it is not clear whether they understood the questions at all.

Apart from the subjects' dislike of writing tests, the WST also revealed some other important features. The first question in the second half of the WST[2] was particularly interesting. This question revealed that the subjects were only interested in and/or aware of the major factual details in the picture. They were unwilling or unable to be imaginative in their description. Some of the subjects saw the way the rain is depicted in the picture as 'water falling from the tree'. Very few realized that the boy hanging on to a branch in the picture, is really hanging out the washing. They thought that he was trying to get it off the line, thus losing all its humorous impact. This was another important point revealed in this task: that they did not see anything humorous in the picture. To them it was nothing more than a display of facts.

In fact a few of them thought that this picture was a factual representation of a permanent way of life, e.g life in a village. Some of them even went so far as to make philosophical observations about what they saw: life is hard for people living in a village. On the whole this task drew a better response in the pre test than in the post test.

Some interesting examples of cultural specificity were revealed in the multiple choice options selected by some of the subjects and also by the British and Sri Lankan informants who did the test to screen it for American culture specific items. Item 116 in the original (item 113 in the revised version) is an example.

'That one has a quick temper. Whew!'
'Yeah. You'd think he _____'.

1. had green eyes
2. had blue eyes
3. had brown hair
4. was a red head
5. was a blonde

The British informants and the Sri Lankans including the researcher chose option 4. As Bachman and Palmer's scoring key reveals, (see Appendix 1.2), in American usage the correct option is 1. Item 72 in the second half of the MCT (given below) was another interesting example. While the researcher was supported in her choice of option 2 by the British and Sri Lankan informants, the best organized passage according to American usage is 4.

72.

1. My Volkswagen gets up to 40 miles per gallon. It is much more economical than my Chevrolet, which gets only 30 mpg, but it is less comfortable. My Chevy rides better on rough roads since it is 18 feet long. But my VW is 4 feet shorter and rides less smoothly. Therefore, the two cars are very different.

2. My Volkswagen is more economical than my Chevrolet, but it is less comfortable. The VW gets better petrol mileage, upto 40 miles per gallon, while my Chevy can get only 30 mpg. But my Chevy is over 18 feet long, 4 feet longer than the VW, which gives it a smoother ride on rough roads.

3. My Volkswagen is more economical than my Chevrolet. The VW can get upto 40 miles per gallon, whereas the Chevy can get only 30 mpg. My VW is 4 feet shorter than my Chevy, being only 14 feet long. this makes the Chevy more comfortable on rough roads.

4. My Volkswagen is different from my Chevrolet. It gets petrol mileage -upto 40 miles per gallon. The Chevy can get only 30 mpg. And the Chevy is 18 feet long, while my VW is only 14 feet long, which makes it less comfortable on rough roads.

5. My Volkswagen is economical: it gets upto 40 miles per gallon. My Chevy is less economical; it gets only 30 mpg. But the Chevy is more comfortable, being over 18 feet long and therefore having a smoother ride. The shorter, 14-foot VW has a much less comfortable ride on rough roads.

6.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Results

In this section, the results of the pre and post tests are discussed in relation to the specific and general hypotheses the investigation was meant to test. The results of the tests led to some interesting findings about sociolinguistic competence and CA, and the importance of these aspects in the CC of Sri Lankan learners at the tertiary level. The statistical tests however,

did not provide significant evidence in support of the hypotheses. Because of the overambitious nature of the research design which, the experience of having conducted the experiment made evident requires stable conditions to be successfully implemented, and because of the practical difficulties under which the experiment was carried out (discussed in 6.4.3.4), this outcome was not altogether surprising. The interesting results that the experiment did yield, showed that the investigation had been worthwhile conducting. One of the most important parts of the experiment was the construction and use of the teaching materials. The classroom experience of using these materials turned out to be worthwhile as discussed in 6.4. If the pre and post test results had supported the hypotheses it would have made the whole experiment more rewarding, but as it is, the results are interesting, particularly from a pedagogical point of view. For details of the pre test and post test performance of the experimental and control groups and for details of the statistical tests performed on the data, see appendix 2.

6.3.1. The Results in Relation to the Hypotheses:

Since this investigation was undertaken to investigate whether increased Cultural Awareness (CA) leads to improved CC, the results of the investigation need to be discussed in relation to the general hypothesis outlined in 1.5.1. This section will attempt to do that, and in addition the specific hypothesis in relation to different parts of the investigation will also be discussed.

6.3.1.1. The Specific Hypothesis

The specific hypothesis underlying this investigation as discussed in 1.5.2 was that in relation to this investigation, the experimental group who receive special treatment would do better in the post test. The treatment was in the form of teaching materials designed to make the learners aware of a sample of cultural aspects underlying sociolinguistic conventions of use and the relation of these to the use of the SL. It was hypothesized that the experimental group taught using these materials would do better in the components of the test, testing sociolinguistic competence, and possibly in the other components.

6.3.1.2. The General Hypothesis:

If the experimental group scored higher marks than the control group for sociolinguistic items (SI) testing CA, this would support the general hypothesis that increased CA leads to improvement in sociolinguistic competence and in turn to improved CC. The statistical evidence did not support this hypothesis, as all the subjects performed slightly better in the post test, irrespective of which subject group they belonged to (experimental or control). The slight improvement found in the experimental group in the SI in the post test, was not found to be statistically significant, nor was it significantly different from the slight improvement found in the control group. Therefore, the statistical findings of this study do not support the general hypothesis concerning the relationship between CA and CC. However, evidence other than statistical revealed by the experiment point to a strong relationship between CA and sociolinguistic competence especially in the case of the MCT results.

Possible reasons for the statistically disappointing outcome of the experiment in relation to the points emerging from the investigation will be discussed in the sections below.

6.3.2. Possible Reasons for the Outcome:

The failure of the experiment to provide statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that increased CA leads to improved CC may be due to several reasons:

1. The general hypothesis that increased CA leads to increased CC may be incorrect.

2. The test instrument might not have been effective in testing the subjects improvement in CA.

3. The teaching materials used for the purpose of teaching CA to the experimental group in order to increase sociolinguistic competence leading to CC may have been unsatisfactory for this purpose.

4. There might have been a mismatch between CA in the form of SI tested in the test, and CA as taught in the teaching materials.

5. Other miscellaneous reasons such as irregular attendance at classes, students not doing their best in some parts of the post test, the test having to be administered on several days etc. discussed in 6.5 may have been partially

responsible for the results.

These reasons will be discussed in turn in the sections below.

6.3.2.1. The Relationship Between Cultural Awareness And Communicative Competence:

Though the results of the experiment did not provide statistical evidence to support the hypothesis about CA and CC, other evidence emerging from the investigation strongly supports the idea that CA is an important area in ESL. There is a significant difference in the subjects' performance in SI as opposed to non-sociolinguistic items (NSI) ($p<.001$) in both the pre and post tests (see appendix 2.1). The mean % score for NSI was 51.1 while the mean % score for SI was only 35.3. In both tests, subject and syllabus groups alike found SI far more difficult.

That SI is a problem area is highlighted by the results showing the mean scores for the item types (see appendix 2.1). The lowest mean is for SI for the experimental group in the pre test. The highest mean is for NSI for the control group in the post test. In relation to both experimental and control groups in both the pre and the post tests the means for NSI are significantly greater in all groups of comparisons, as revealed by the Scheffe tests (see appendix 2.1).

For some unexplained reason the experimental groups start out with lower means in both the SI and the NSI in the MCT section in the pre test, even though subjects were assigned randomly to the experimental and control groups. The same pattern emerges in the WST too. For details see Appendix 2.5.

The fact that all subjects perform worse in the SI brought out in the results of the analysis of variance (see appendix 2.3), is further supported when MCT items are analysed for difficulty levels. Most of the items that 50% or more subjects were unable to answer correctly in both the pre and post tests are SI. See Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 % of Sociolinguistic and Non-sociolinguistic Items in the Multiple Choice Test that <50% Subjects Failed to Answer Correctly (Pre and Post Tests)

Total Number of Items	Grammar	20 (NSI)
	Pragmatic	52 (NSI)
	Socio.	44 (SI)

	Pre Test			Post Test		
	Gram. Items	Prag. Items	Soc. Items	Gram. Items	Prag. Items	Soc. Items
No of items 50-74% answered incorrectly	07	37	33	05	28	29
% of items 50-74% answered incorrectly	35	58	75	25	54	66
No of items <75% answered incorrectly	03	13	18	01	08	14
% of items <75% answered incorrectly	15	25	41	05	15	32
% of Soc. items 50-74% answered incorrectly			75			66
% of N.Soc items 50-74% answered incorrectly	51			46		
% of Soc. items <75% answered incorrectly			41			32
% of N.Soc. items <75% answered incorrectly	22			13		

At the post test <75% of the subjects averaged across subject and syllabus groups found SI by far the more difficult -32% SI as opposed to only 13% NSI. For details see Appendix 2.3.

At this point it is necessary to point out that in Bachman and Palmer's test, only culture related aspects such as register and nativeness are considered as SI. However, there is a a subset of items which come under pragmatic competence which are cultural awareness related. These are items of

vocabulary and phrases which test the idiomatic use of the language. Quite a few of the items testing pragmatic competence which 50% or more of the subjects could not answer correctly belong to this category. For item type in relation to frequency of correct answers see Appendix 2.2. If these items are considered as SI rather than NSI, the difficulty level of the SI would be still higher.

Since awareness of the socio-cultural features that underlie language use as tested in these items would have resulted in higher test scores, this clearly indicates that the lack of CA is definitely one reason for the lack of sociolinguistic competence, and in turn for the lack of CC. Therefore, even though the results of the present study are not as predicted, it does not invalidate the general hypothesis about CA and CC. It does seem worthwhile to propose that a further investigation organized along different lines and administered differently might well give positive results.

6.3.2.2. The Test Instrument as Ineffective:

Though the unexpected outcome of the investigation could perhaps be attributed to the test instrument being ineffective, the results once again indicate this not to be the case.

6.3.2.2.1. The Multiple Choice Test:

To take the MCT first, this test is found to be effective in that it identifies correctly the differences in the CC of the three syllabus groups, and the more proficient from the less proficient within subject and syllabus groups.

As discussed in 6.2 above, the syllabus groups belong to three levels in the proficiency level structure discussed in Chapter 2. This is in accordance with the level at which they were placed on the results of the placement test, and depending on the amount of English instruction they have received while at university. Since the syllabus group arts1, starts off at a higher level than the other groups, being placed at level 4, they should do best in the tests, even though they have had only 6 months of English instruction at the university. Arts3 and law2 have started off from the same point by being placed at level 3 on entry. However, arts3 have passed this level after one year of instruction and have had two years of instruction at level 4. Law1 on the other hand are still at level 3 and have had only only 6 months of English instruction.

Accordingly, it is predictable that arts3 would do better in both tests than law1, but not better than arts1. The mean scores for the three groups are: arts1 54%, arts3 50% and law1 39%. The results of the Scheffe tests performed on the MCT data confirm this prediction, (see appendix 2.1). This shows that the MC component of the test is an effective instrument in testing different levels of ability.

This section of the test is also effective in that it is able to highlight the area that the subjects find most difficult -the culture related conventions of language use.

Though grammar and vocabulary too are difficult areas, it is less so at the higher levels of proficiency -levels 3 & 4. Though learners at these levels have problems in using correct grammar in speech and writing (as for instance their performance in the WST reveals), still, they are able to recognize what is grammatical and what is not most of the time. The areas that they have problems with are structures such as the perfect forms and prepositions etc. The results of the test confirm this as it is the perfect forms and complex dependent clauses that 75% of the subjects find difficult.

Though phrases testing idiomatic usage are not treated as sociolinguistic items by Bachman and Palmer, the test scores effectively show that these items that require CA because of conventions that control their use are found to be more difficult than other items which do not require CA as such. A few examples are given below to illustrate this point. All these occur in the section of the test that tests pragmatic competence and are found to be difficult by more than 50% of the subjects at the post test.

1. I'd like to put that off. (Item 37)
2. Sue brought about the change. (Item 38)
3. Sheila doesn't give a hoot. (Item 42)
4. Hey, you'd better cut that out! (Item 46)
5. That's really the pits. (Item 51)
6. He's really smashed isn't he? (Item 55)
7. I get a kick out of that. (Item 56)

The MC test is effective then, in screening the type of language use that the subjects find most difficult and is therefore an effective instrument in this respect.

This test is also effective in that the graded level of difficulty in each subsection is justified in relation to most of the subsections. In the results, this is indicated by the descending order of the number of correct responses in each subsection. Table 6.6 below outlines the general pattern. For full details see Appendix 2.2. Though there are items between the most difficult and the least difficult that do not fit into the general pattern, there is a gradual increase in the level of difficulty in each subsection. This is true in relation to 5 of the 8 subsections in the MCT. The test is therefore effective in testing levels of CC, as only the most proficient subjects are able to get the most difficult items right. The least proficient subjects are only able to answer the first few items in each subsection correctly.

This pattern as Table 6.6 shows is consistent across both pre and post tests.

Table 6.6 Frequency of Correct Responses in Each Subsection of the Multiple Choice Test Ranging from the Least to the Most Difficult (Pre and Post Tests)

Total Number of Subjects 33

Trait Tested in Subsection	Item	Frequency Pre Test	Post Test	Item	Frequency Pre Test	Post Test
Grammar* (1-20)	01	100	97	20	09	06
Vocabulary* (21-56)	21	98	88	56	03	02
Cohesion* (57-69)	57	100	97	69	29	36
Organization* (70-72)	70	39	63	72	18	15
Formulaic (73-81)	73	21	27	81	21	09
Register (82-94)	82	39	45	94	33	51
Nativeness* (95-110)	95	33	30	10	06	06
Cultural Ref. (111-116)	111	15	15	116	21	24

*Sub-sections in which frequencies occur according to the ascending order of difficulty

It is an interesting finding that graded difficulty levels do not hold for three of the four sections testing sociolinguistic competence. On the whole, frequencies of correct responses in the sections testing sociolinguistic competence do not follow an orderly pattern, as far as the Sri Lankan subjects are concerned. Certain items irrespective of whether they occur at the beginning, middle or the end of a section, seem to be more difficult than other items. It seems to be entirely a matter of whether a subject is aware of a certain convention or cultural feature or not. There seems to be no level of difficulty involved as in the case of grammatical competence for instance, where there is a clear distinction between the level of difficulty of item 1 (100% correct responses) and item 20 (9% correct responses).

A few examples from the subsections testing different aspects of sociolinguistic competence illustrate this point.

To take the subsection testing formulaic language first, the first item in this section (item 73) was found to be as difficult as the last item (item 81) by 75% of the subjects.

Item 73: "Hey,Jim, do you want this over there?"
"No, leave it where it is. We won't need it until the boss gets back tomorrow."
"(1) Okay, then what do I do (2) as to this other one?"
"Move that one (3)over by the first one, so (4) they can pick them both at the (5) same time."

(Subjects are required to identify the word/phrase that is unnatural in this context)

In the case of the Sri Lankan subjects, this item was more difficult than 4 items that follow this item (items 74, 75, 77, 79).

The same erratic pattern occurs in the section testing register. Neither is the first item (item 82) the easiest, nor the last item (item 92) the most difficult. One of the items that most of the subjects found difficult both in the pre test (88%) and in the post test (85%) is item 86.

Item 86: Between the time of our forefathers and (1) the modern era, (2) the legal system of our country (3) has really changed. (4) Our present system is (5) a model of complexity'.

(Subjects required to recognize the phrase inappropriate in the context)

Subjects are able to recognize an error or an inappropriate usage when it is glaringly so. In the case of the above example it is *almost* appropriate. It is the sort of subtle difference in language appropriacy as shown here that they find extremely difficult.

The graded level of difficulty holds for the section testing nativeness, even though the first item in the section (item 95) is not the easiest for most subjects. Seven items which follow have a higher correct response frequency than item 95 given below, where subjects are required to pick the appropriate phrase in the context.

Item 95: Good-bye _____!

(1) Enjoy a good trip
(2) Go with God
(3) Go well
(4) Good journey
(5) Have a good trip

Once again, in the section testing cultural reference the first item (item 111) is the most difficult.

Item 111: "Do you think you'll pass the final?"
"No I think it'll be my _____".
(1) Black Rock
(2) Waterloo
(3) London
(4) Grand Canyon
(5) Missisipi

In the case of this item, it is evident that the problem is that the subjects are simply unaware of the cultural reference, while they are aware of the cultural reference in item 114, which was the least difficult for most subjects (63% in the pre test and 75% in the post test answered this item correctly).

Item 114: "Do you want to jump from there?"
"No, thanks; I'd rather not be another _____".
(1) Humpty Dumpty
(2) Cinderella
(3) Snow White
(4) William Tell
(5) Sleeping Beauty

Even though they have not been aware of all the cultural references they certainly knew what happened to Humpty Dumpty.

This pattern of responses in the sociolinguistic section of the MCT bring up the problem of the difficulty of testing CA, which will be taken up in Chapter 7.

Of the three components of the test used in the experiment, the MCT was the most effective and the SRT the least effective.

6.3.2.2.2. The Writing Sample Test:

The MCT as discussed above makes valid distinctions between the levels of ability. This is not entirely the case with the WST and the SRT.

Though the WST is effective in distinguishing the most proficient from the least proficient, it does not reveal a convincing pattern with regard to the vast number of subjects who fall into the middle range. This is due to the special circumstances surrounding the WST, outlined in 6.4.3.3.

ESL learners in Sri Lanka do not get much opportunity to write both inside and outside the classroom. They do not get much opportunity to write in the classroom because of the restricted time available and because learners try to avoid doing the written work that is assigned because they find it time consuming and laborious. Among university students, this is specially the case with arts, commerce and law students. Unlike the natural sciences and medical students who are forced to write reports, tutorials etc. in English, the arts, commerce and law students are not called upon to to do any writing in English in a practical way outside the classroom. The normal material used by the Certificate Course students (experimental groups 2 & 3) do have written work incorporated in them, but the actual amount of writing done differs from group to group. Since their proficiency in this area is low, they dislike doing written tests. Therefore, the poor results cannot be attributed to the inefficacy of the test instrument, but rather to the special circumstances in relation to this particular sample. Therefore the post test results and hence the pre test post test comparisons have to be treated cautiously.

Though the WST did not yield satisfactory results, it cannot be regarded as unsuitable in the same way as the SRT (see 6.3.2.2.3 below). Two of the three experimental groups are supposed to do writing in their English classes and therefore, it is only right that written ability should be tested. Though the WST results detracted from the effectiveness of the experiment, what the test did reveal about the learners' writing ability and also their attitude towards writing activities is important.

6.3.2.2.3. The Self Rating Test:

The situation is somewhat different in the case of the SRT. The 4 point scale seem to limit the subjects' choice as there is a tendency to move away from the two extremes. The majority of the subjects opted for the mid points in the scale quite consistently, varying between 2 & 3. The most proficient subjects seem to prefer rating themselves as 3 rather than 4, while the weaker subjects opt for 2 more often than 1. The fact that the scale is labelled

Bad <----------> Good

may have had something to do with this. There is a culture related tendency among Sri Lankans to avoid extremes. Just as 'good' is regarded as too high a rating, 'bad' is rejected as being too extreme.

This component of the test was not a good indicator of the subjects' levels of CC. There was no significant correlation between the subjects' self ratings when compared with the scores for the sections of the MCT testing that particular trait. It is interesting to note that the only significant correlations were in relation to items testing nativeness and register; although even these were not large: $r_{pbi}=0.439$, $p<.05$ (post test), $r_{pbi}=0.51$, $p<.01$ (pre test) for nativeness for the experimental group and $r_{pbi}=0.377$, $p<.05$ (experimental group), $r_{pbi}=0.502$, $p<.05$ (control group) for items testing register in the pre test. However it is interesting that both these are aspects of sociolinguistic competence. The subjects' assessment of their ability to use situation specific language (item 30), and to recognize features such as politeness from the language that is used (item 44) seem to be the most sensitive to these features if the scores on the MCT on items testing these features are used as objective criteria of abilities.

On the other hand their self ratings for other aspects such as grammatical awareness (item 25), mastery of vocabulary (item 34) etc. did not correlate significantly with the MCT scores for items testing these aspects. Even in the case of items testing nativeness and register the correlations must be interpreted cautiously as results differ between the pre test and the post test. In relation to register, there is a significant correlation between SRT items and the MCT scores in the pre test, but not in the post test. In the case of items testing nativeness, there is a significant but small correlation ($r_{pbi}=0.51$ (pre test), $r_{pbi}=0.439$ (post test)) between the SRT items and the MCT scores for the pre and post tests. Therefore, in general the usefulness of the SRT results are questionable. It is interesting that there is some suggestion that the subjects seem to be more aware of the level of their ability (or inability) in relation to sociolinguistic aspects than in relation to grammar and vocabulary. However, because of the inconsistent pattern in the results and the very low correlation between SRT and MCT scores, it is necessary to state that the SRT is not an effective instrument for testing CC as far as the Sri Lankan subjects are concerned.

If it had been possible to pilot test the test components with a sample of Sri Lankan learners, some of the problems regarding the WST and the SRT may have come to light and could have been avoided. But practical issues made this impossible. Since the MCT unlike the WST and the SRT, is clearly effective in testing the different levels of CC in the subject and syllabus groups which took part in the experiment, it is unlikely that the statistically disappointing results of this study are due to any major problems with the MCT.

6.3.2.3. The Efficacy of the Teaching Materials:

A third possible reason for the results of the investigation not being as predicted, is the inefficacy of the teaching materials. In order to obtain better scores in the SI in the post test, the experimental group need to have increased in CA between the pre and post tests. This was meant to be effected by means of the treatment given to the experimental groups. It is possible that the unsatisfactory outcome of the experiment is in part attributable to the shortcomings of the treatment. Since these learners received treatment different to that of the control group as outlined in 6.4.3.5, they should by right have performed differently in the post test. However, the fact that the post test performance of both experimental and control groups showed signs of less conscientious participation (discussed in 6.5.2.1) must not be overlooked.

As outlined in chapters 1, 3 and 4 it is not easy either to test CC or to teach CA, though both are necessary and desirable. In an investigation of this type it is difficult to approximate the efficacy of either. The only way in which the teaching materials designed to teach CA could be tested is by matching a sample of CA against a sample of CC. What was undertaken in designing the teaching materials used in this experiment was to expose learners to a variety of things that form a sample of CA. Though the response of the subjects taking part in the experiment did indicate that the materials seemed to go down well, still, it is possible that these materials are not be the best for improving CA. These materials could have been designed according to different formats. The format that was used (the thematic design) has many points to recommend it, but the materials designed using this format could be revised to make them more effective as discussed in 5.3.

Since it is possible that a teaching experiment different from the one used

in this experiment might yield different results, shortcomings of the teaching instrument and the teaching experiment are possible reasons for the failure of the hoped for outcome.

6.3.2.4. Mismatch Between the Test and the Teaching Materials:

In an experiment where one part of the investigation depends entirely on the results of the other part, it is essential that the two parts of the investigation should be in accord. Though the test instrument is effective in its own right, the possibility of there being a mismatch between the test instrument and the teaching materials need to be considered.

Though it is not easy to match a sample of CA against a sample of CC, the organization of the test according to a different framework and the use of teaching materials revised taking the insights gained from the investigation into account might lead to better results. The very short duration of the teaching experiment (6 weeks, but see 6.4 and 6.5.2) was also a shortcoming. Carrying out the teaching experiment over a longer period of time is also likely to be beneficial.

One aspect of the mismatch between the test and the teaching materials takes the form of the omission of the oral test. Because of the reasons given in 6.3.1 the oral test component of Bachman and Palmer's test was not used in the experiment. Though unavoidable, this was nevertheless a disadvantage. Most of the classroom activities in the teaching experiment were discussion based, and this aspect of the experiment could not be directly tested in the parts of the test that were used. Because of the important place of oral skills and the knowledge and ability to use speech conventions in the teaching, this aspect not being tested does lead to a mismatch between the treatment and the test. It is not possible to judge whether the inclusion of the oral component would have influenced the pattern of the results, and if so how far. However, it is necessary to take into account, that there is a mismatch between the classroom activities in which both conscious and unconscious teaching and practice of discourse conventions played an important part and the test in the form in which it was used.

Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that the mismatch between the test instrument and the treatment is partly responsible for the outcome.

6.3.3. The Explanations for the Outcome Favoured by the Teaching Experiment:

Of the different possible explanations for the outcome of the experiment discussed in the above subsections, two stand out as being the explanations favoured by the classroom observations discussed in the next section (6.4). These are the possible mismatch between the test and the teaching experiment and certain imperfections of the teaching materials. In the light of these observations, it is also possible to conclude that the effects of these problems would not have been felt so acutely if the need to contend with practical problems such as the learners' irregular attendance, the test having to be administered on several days and the learners' less conscientious performance in some parts of the test had not arisen.

6.4. The Teaching Experiment

6.4.1. Introduction:

The teaching experiment both in terms of the construction of the teaching materials and the experience of using these in an actual classroom setting is probably the most important part of the whole experiment. By providing an opportunity to see just how the learners for whom the teaching materials (described in 5.2) were intended responded to these materials was of significance from the pedagogical point of view. The classroom experience was important in that it showed the strengths and the weaknesses of the materials, it provided important insights about the hypothesis about CA and CC and it pointed out ways and means by which these materials could be made to work better. In this section, the teaching experiment will be discussed in relation to the subjects' responses to the texts, subject matter and techniques. In addition, classroom observations providing insights about the concept of CA and its relationship to language and about the text types, methods and techniques used in the units will be discussed. The teaching experiment was based on 12 of the 14 units discussed in 5.2. Two of the units had to be left out for lack of time. For a sample of the lesson units and accompanying teacher notes see Appendices 3.1 & 3.2.

6.4.2. The Subjects' Competence Prior to the Teaching Experiment:

As both their performance at the pre test (see appendix 2 for details of pre test performance) and the researcher's interaction with them revealed, the subjects' competence in using English varied a great deal. There were some subjects who were fluent in their speech while there were others who found it fairly difficult to communicate in English. In the case of a few of the subjects it was difficult to make any judgements independent of the tests because they were reluctant to interact in English in the classroom with the researcher or with each other.

However, since all three groups of students had performed well enough at the placement test for new entrants to be placed at level 3 or higher, this was an indication that they were expected to have fairly good reading ability, since both the placement test and the course materials they use are mostly grammar and reading based. In the case of the group of law students, the material that is normally used in class tend to be subject based. The texts that form their reading material come from law reports or from newspaper or journal articles related to the legal system or court proceedings. In the case of the first and third year arts students, their course material uses texts from various sources graded according to the grammatical structures taught in each lesson unit. In both cases, greater emphasis is placed on reading, though other activities such as writing and speech too are meant to be a part of classroom activity.

6.4.3. Classroom Observations:

In this section, observations made during the experimental sessions during which the teaching materials described in 5.2 were tried out are discussed. The way in which the subjects responded to the unusual culture specific subject matter and to the diversity of techniques is discussed. The materials are evaluated on the basis of these classroom observations (6.4.3.1 & 6.4.3.2). The light shed by these observations on the relationship between CA and textual interpretation and the importance of background knowledge in meaning construction is discussed and the learners' response to this culture specificity outlined (6.4.3.3). Verbal humour as opposed to humour depicted in a visual medium such as cartoons and pictures was a particular problem area for the learners. This problem is discussed together with possible explanations suggested both by the classroom experiences and theoretical insights (6.4.3.4).

6.4.3.1. Subject Matter:

Though most of the materials were based on culture specific aspects of universal themes, the unusual subject matter did not create problems. In fact, the novelty of some of the information found in the texts seemed to be a stimulant as the researcher had expected from past experience. Students are bored by lesson material in which facts known to them are churned out over and over again. When something unusual is introduced, they show more interest as their curiosity is roused and they make an effort to find out more.

Some of the most profitable and successful discussions that took place among the three experimental groups arose out of material that they found quite unusual, such as the paper rounds done by children in Britain, the stock broker and the stock market about which they knew little, and holidays and travel in Britain and the continent which are different from what these mean to the average Sri Lankan. From the Sri Lankan learners' interpretations and response to texts dealing with these concepts, it also becomes clear that the Sri Lankan learners' 'job schema', 'family schema' etc. differed in remarkable ways from the SL schemata underlying the texts. For example, while the texts on travel have reference to a holiday schema which would comprise sub-schemata such as travel - sea - sun - foreign lands - photographs - food - languages etc., the Sri Lankan holiday schema comprised sub-schemata such as home - village - siesta - baths - no work - family - rest etc., evidencing remarkable differences in the conceptual worlds. Similarly, though there were points of convergence in the 'growing up' schema of the two cultures, sub-schemata such as conflicts and independence did not seem to form a prominent part of the Sri Lankan learners' growing up schema, which seemed to comprise sub-schemata such as responsibility, problems, physical change etc.

The newsagent's advertisement led to a discussion on responsibility and the difference in the values in western society, and the stockbroker's place in the job hierachy led to an interesting discussion about the difference in the economic structure and the job hierachy in the east and the west. On the whole the subjects responded well to the unusual subject matter.

Some of the texts were found to be too difficult. The poem 'Leap Year' and the prose text 'Fighting for Your Marriage' were two of the texts that the subjects found particularly difficult. This was not because the concepts dealt

with in these texts are totally unfamiliar. It was the level of difficulty of the language, allusions and metaphors etc. that posed a problem. Some of the cultural allusions were a little too sophisticated for subjects of this level to understand. Most of the materials did not pose problems and seemed therefore to be of a level suitable for the subjects.

The material tried to make the learners aware of the cultural specificity of universal themes in relation to English and this, the researcher felt from observing subject response in the three experimental classes seemed to be productive. While pinpointing the cultural specificity of certain features, it was also possible to draw cultural parallels and cultural contrasts, and this made it easier for the subjects to understand the cultural specificity.

6.4.3.2. Methods and Techniques:

While presenting a variety of subject matter, an attempt was also made to present this subject matter using a variety of techniques. This was particularly helpful in giving novelty to each classroom session. Some of the techniques that were used were new to the learners and these often drew a positive response. Some of the activities were likewise new and the subjects were a little uncertain how to cope with these (e.g some of the group activities), but managed quite well once they got started. Most of them seemed to enjoy group activities once they accepted these as a normal part of classroom activity.

The subjects' response to a sample of the teaching techniques used in the experiment are discussed below.

1) Cartoon Recognition Task: The cartoon in the first unit on social stratification and language turned out to be a very popular and very successful activity, as it led to a great deal of discussion in class. The subjects sometimes used their MT in discussing the cartoon with each other, and the researcher had to remind them of the need to conduct their discussion in English.

In the type of information that the subjects were able to gather by looking at cartoons a general tendency to look only at major details and to overlook minor details became apparent. This tendency became evident in the picture reading task in the test too as discussed earlier in 6.2.2.2. Their perception

centred on the most striking major details in the picture. They subconsciously tended to disregard all the minor details which contribute a great deal to the right understanding of a picture or cartoon. It is possible to hypothesize that readers are able to get a general idea of a picture or a text depending on how far the meaning of the text could be constructed by referring to the schemata of universal culture. In the case of a picture or a story or folk tale, it is the details -the trimmings- that are culture specific, and therefore have reference to culture specific schemata. This may be a possible reason for the learners' difficulty in perceiving minor details. For example, the GB plate on the holiday makers' car in the cartoon in unit 2 (see appendix 3.1), would establish the identity of the holiday makers for the British readers, or at least for the majority of them, because the GB plate is likely to form a part of their car schema. It is possible to hypothesize that this detail eludes the Sri Lankan learners as their car schema would have no such reference. There could be other explanations of course, such as individual differences in perception. But it is significant that this detail eluded all but the few learners who had more SL cultural orientation than the others. On the whole, the humour generated by cartoons was better understood and drew a better response than humour generated in other ways.

Of the cartoons that were used in the experiment the second was without a caption. The humour in this cartoon resulted entirely from the picture, so that the subjects were not burdened with having to work out what the caption meant. Since there was no language to present any clues, this cartoon was particularly suitable for studying learner interpretation of texts. As discussed earlier with reference to the cartoon in unit 1, learners' interpretation did tend to be largely culture specific. This was also observed in relation to the picture reading task in the test, in which many Sri Lankan learners tended to philosophize on what they saw, like the Greek subjects in Tannen's study (1979:163). In the case of the Sri Lankan learners, this may be related to the cultural tendency to find a 'message' -often of a moral nature- in what is observed.

2) Idiomatic Expressions Recognition Task: This activity which was attempted individually at times and in groups at other times, generated a great deal of interest. The subjects enjoyed working out Sinhala parallels to idiomatic expressions found in the texts. This task was nearly always in the form of circling or underlining expressions in order to draw the subjects'

attention to language that was idiomatic. Sometimes the subjects were asked to discuss the texts with other members of the group and then decide collectively what these expressions were. Working out parallels from the MT was always done in the form of a discussion.

3) Cloze/Conversational Cloze: Most of the subjects were able to cope fairly well with the texts given in cloze form in the materials when the cloze passage was given in their worksheets. They found it easier when a 'story' formed the text than when it was a less clearly organized text such as a conversational transcript. Cloze activities coupled with a listening activity were less successful as the learners tended to disregard meaning in their anxiety to take down the missing words. However, tapes and transcripts were quite new in their classroom experience and this seemed to generate interest. They were interested -and somewhat surprised too- to find that conversations were not made up of complete grammatical units such as sentences indicating how well the concept of 'answering in a complete sentence' had been inculcated in them. Some of the subjects showed some interest in the repetition and the hesitation phenomena found in the transcripts, as such phenomena are less clearly evident in Sinhala/Tamil.

The different cloze tasks followed different formats:

1. Every *n* th word left blank
2. Every *n* th word left blank with the first letter of the missing word supplied
3. Every *n* th word left blank with the first letter and the number of letters which make up the missing word supplied in brackets
4. Every *n* th word left blank with the missing words given in the form of multiple choice options within brackets.

Of these types, the subjects found the first type the hardest and the third type the easiest. The second and fourth types were not particularly easy or difficult.

When doing conversational cloze the subjects were asked to fill in the blanks while listening. This was introduced as a 'short hand task' -as being

similar to the way in which a reporter takes down someone's speech in order to report it. The fact that it was not at all easy to get the subjects to listen to the meaning was disappointing. They were used to doing cloze as an 'exercise' and all they were interested in, was to try and write down as many of the missing words as possible. The researcher tried to remedy their tendency to sacrifice meaning for words by getting them to 'report' what was said to another group who were not familiar with their transcript, but this was not very successful.

4) Narrating a Story/Incident to the Rest of the Class: Initially the subjects were very reluctant to engage in this type of 'individual' speaking activity. It was difficult to get one member to volunteer as spokesman/woman. When a group was asked to select someone, each member suggested someone other than him/herself. The most able speaker in each group was selected each time. At this stage the researcher had to step in and say that this was not satisfactory. With some prompting and a great deal of reluctance on the part of some subjects, eventually it became possible to persuade the different groups to undertake such tasks.

When one subject was selected as spokesman/woman for a group, the group was encouraged to help him/her with the narration. Even with this help the subjects had difficulty remembering and narrating details. They were often able to narrate the outline of a 'story', but not the details. The rest of the group could not help as they could not recall, or had not comprehended these details any better at the outset. This difficulty of remembering and narrating details could be linked with the inability to perceive details discussed in relation to the cartoon reading tasks. Schema theoretic findings indicate that comprehension, perception and recall are background knowledge related. According to Rumelhart and Ortony (1977, cited in Rumelhart 1980),

> '...remembering ..[is].. essentially similar to the process of perceiving, except that, in remembering, the data source is no longer sensorial but memorial' (1980:49).

If the learners are unable to perceive the details of the story which are for the most part culture conditioned, then it is not surprising that they are unable to remember and narrate these details afterwards. As Steffensen insightfully suggests,

> 'what appears to be a language problem in the recall protocols of non-native speakers of English may sometimes be a problem of background knowledge' (1986:73).

What was also interesting was the fact that the learners for the most part were able to remember and narrate the general outline of the stories, a finding reported by other researchers in relation to prose recall (e.g Meyer 1977:179-200). This may be significantly linked to background schemata. The story schema in Sinhala is not very different from the Anglo-Saxon schema as discussed in 5.4. This may be a factor that assists learners to recall the general framework of the story while being unable to recall details.

Steffensen's research using a clause level reading procedure (op. cit.) also sheds light on this problem. Steffensen suggests that there is a link between linguistic reflexes and schemata generation and that background knowledge and register interact. When the background information is familiar,

> 'the reader anticipates other exemplars of the register in the text and these in turn affect the accessing of sub-schemata as the text is processed' (ibid:84).

She also presents evidence to suggest that the processing of cohesive devices in a text is also affected by the depth of background knowledge. Failure to make the necessary cohesive links because of not being able to generate the appropriate schemata and the resulting confusion could be a major source of difficulty in comprehension and recall for SL learners and may explain the difficulties experienced by the Sri Lankan learners in recalling details in stories.

5) The Strip Story: The researcher was able to try out this activity with only one of the three experimental groups as the other two groups were too small for this activity. It was very popular and very successful with the group that did take part in it. The first time they attempted this activity, each subject wrote down the sentence/unit of the story that s/he had memorized and then the group compared their notes and put the story together. They were not confident enough the first time to do it from memory and the researcher did not insist that they should. The second time they agreed to do it without writing down what they had memorized, and it turned out to be quite as successful as the previous attempt. This activity was rewarding as it led to spontaneous discussion among the subjects. What Gibson (1975:149-154) says

about this technique was borne out by the responses of the subjects taking part in this experiment.

6) Group Work: Various activities -e.g reading, listening to someone reading/narrating a story, looking at pictures, writing an advertisement/letter- were done in groups. It was evident that the subjects had not been exposed much to group work of this type. Therefore, it took some time for them to get used to working by themselves in groups, without having the teacher provide all the answers, or oversee the discussion. It helped, when the researcher set them a task and then left them to work things out and took no more notice of them even when there was complete silence and no activity whatever for a while. After looking towards the researcher hopefully for some minutes the subjects seemed to realize that no help was coming from that direction and were therefore forced to get on with the task as best as they could. One or two in the group would begin by saying something and soon most of the subjects would be involved in the discussion to some extent. The teacher not being intimidated into saying something by the initial silence and inactivity proved productive.

After a few days group work was taken for granted and was successful not so much because of the projects the subjects undertook in groups, but because it gave them an opportunity to use what English they knew. They were often tempted to switch over to the MT when they were discussing something they found particularly interesting or linguistically complicated. On these occasions a reminder from the researcher was necessary to make them switch back. They sometimes used this as a ploy to draw the researcher's attention to their group, and to evoke laughter in the group. This was quite consciously done. Group work was particularly useful in that it provided the learners the opportunity to use their linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge. The researcher was able to introduce discourse conventions in launching discussions, in making suggestions, asking for clarification and so on. In the case of discussions it was the same type activity that took place in different guises, and the same type of conventions for asking for information, expressing agreement/disagreement, asking for clarification etc. had to be used over and over again. In this way opportunity for practice was provided without the learners being aware that they were practising anything. The 'chunks' the learners used were basic ones, but what was important was that they got opportunities to use them at all. There were also opportunities for using

formulaic expressions such as 'please', 'sorry', 'thank you' etc. There were a few learners who never said very much and in their case it is not possible to say that they got opportunities to practice. But even in the case of these learners it is possible to say that they received some exposure to these conventions.

From the learners' point of view the most important thing about group work seemed to be the security they felt in working as a group. While a successful piece of work received collective praise, mistakes too were regarded as collective. Therefore, no subject felt that it was a mistake to say or do something in case what was said or done was wrong. Since most of the subjects seemed to have a dread of making mistakes, group activity helped to rid them of this fear to some extent.

The groups were asked to discuss difficult concepts, vocabulary etc. among themselves, and most of the time an individual subject's queries were answered by another individual/s in the group. It was seldom that they could not find the answer within the group, indicating that their collective knowledge when it came to grammar and the lexicon was quite remarkable. The researcher merely acted as a resource person in these group sessions. Whenever they could be organized, these group sessions were the most successful aspect of the whole experiment, but organizing a successful group session was not easy because of the small numbers in two of the experimental groups (2 & 3) and the poor attendance on some days.

7) Written Work: Written work was attempted both individually and in groups and was not particularly successful or popular as either. On the whole the subjects had a distaste for written work and since they took a long time over it, very little time was left for any other activity during a session, when written work was attempted. This was not satisfactory as the lesson material was planned to allow for several different activities during one class session. Another problem was that the subjects made no attempt to do their best when it came to written work. They were either in a hurry to finish or otherwise just marked time until the session was over. Their dislike of written work became quite evident when they were asked to write an ending to a story. After spending over twenty minutes over it very few of the subjects had written anything at all. Since the story upto to that point had been discussed in the class, there was no possibility of this being due to lack of comprehension. At

this stage, the researcher asked them to *tell* her what they thought the ending was, and they were far more ready to hazard their guesses. In this particular case they seemed to dislike writing down something that they were not sure of, while they did not mind expressing it orally.

This distaste of written work which also surfaced in the test, is not easy to explain. Since the ESL courses concentrate on teaching grammar, and according to SLD findings discussed in 4.1, planned discourse ought to be easier for ESL learners who have been formally taught. This certainly did not prove to be the case with these learners. It would not be an exaggeration to say that their planned discourse was worse than their unplanned discourse. This seems to indicate that grammar and vocabulary teaching does not necessarily lead to mastery in the skills needed for planned discourse. It is true that most of these learners were not willing to exert themselves, but this was because they found writing extremely burdensome.

One of the writing tasks in the test and findings in discourse theory provide some explanation. The writing task in the test in which the learners were asked to write a letter to a friend informing him/her about problems the writer had been having with her/his phone (see appendix 1.3), was very illuminating. Most learners went straight on to talk about the problem and did not see anything incongruous about writing a letter to a friend for the sole purpose of saying that there was something wrong with their phone. In contrast, one or two of the more fluent learners justified their writing about this problem by beginning the letter with a statement that they were writing because they could not phone as there was something the matter with their phone. The other interesting fact revealed both in relation to this activity and other writing activities in the classroom was the total one-sidedness in the writing of the majority of the learners. From a discourse point of view, it could be said that these learners did not view writing as discourse at all. They expressed or tried to express what they thought, but there was no attempt to make it acceptable or comprehensible to the reader. According to a discourse view, these learners limited their writing to performing *focal acts* and did not bring in *enabling acts* (Widdowson 1984:49-50) into their writing. This would be related to their unawareness of the rhetorical/discourse conventions of the SL; and as such to a lack in their sociolinguistic knowledge.

The other problem seemed to be that their writing skills were indeed very

poor and it needed quite an effort on their part to write anything, and even then what they produced was of very poor quality. If these students have no opportunity to practice their speech, they have even less opportunity to practice their writing, and they did seem to dislike immensely the thought of making mistakes when they wrote. Since, as explained in 2.5 students in the arts and law faculty are not called upon to do any practical writing in English, there is no motivation for them to undertake something which they find laborious.

The amount of time spent on these different activities differed from unit to unit. For example, major writing activities were included in 5 of the 14 units (3, 5, 7, 10 & 13), though some form of writing is included in 11 of the 14. Activities such as the strip story, culture translation and cloze were again limited to units which contained texts that lent themselves particularly well to these activities. Reading, listening and discussion were alike important in all the units, though certain of the units emphasized listening specifically by employing tapes and transcripts. Discussions formed a large part of the classroom activity because of the emphasis placed both on introducing and practising sociolinguistic conventions. A certain amount of conscious explanation of culture specific features such as sociolinguistic conventions, politeness features and idiomatic use for example, were brought into the unit that either introduced these concepts for the first time -e.g idiomatic use in unit 1- or dwelt on these features extensively -e.g politeness and sociolinguistic conventions in unit 5. As to the amount of conscious explanation and discussion that was undertaken, this varied from unit to unit and from group to group. The researcher was partly guided by learner interest and partly on the amount of knowledge the learners already had, in deciding on this. Some discussions developed much better and provided more opportunity for introducing cultural information and sociolinguistic conventions and providing opportunities for using these than did others. Some topics seem to be more effective in generating discussions as discussed in the sections above. However, since a topic that did not prove to be particularly good at generating an animated discussion with one experimental group proved more effective with another group, it seems reasonable to conclude that it depended to some extent on the subjects themselves. The changing patterns of attendance too seem to be responsible for this, as the absence of a particularly talkative learner, seemed to have an adverse effect on the discussions. There were

special topics such as the 'pools' in unit 4, and the concept of conventions in unit 5, where a specified amount of conscious explanation was thought essential, whereas, in most of the other units this was left open, in order to suit the different topics and conventions and the response of different groups of learners. This arrangement proved quite satisfactory at the trials.

6.4.3.3. Cultural Awareness:

It became evident during the experiment that cultural features and how well someone understands them certainly affect textual interpretation. This is an important finding. There were occasions when the subjects superimposed upon situations, their own interpretation of cultural features found in these situations. The interpretations given by some of the subjects, of the cartoon in the cartoon recognition task in the unit dealing with social stratification and language (unit 1) could be attributed to this. Thus the upper class man in the cartoon was interpreted as being a 'bridegroom'. This interpretation was due to the flower worn in his buttonhole. In the Sri Lankan context a flower is usually worn only by the bridegroom or a groomsman at a wedding and forms part of the Sri Lankan wedding schema. Similarly, the subjects were not familiar with the working class stereotype depicted in the cartoon, even though they did recognize the man to be of the working class. According to some subjects he was a mechanic making inquiries about a repair job, while others thought he was a burglar, because of the tools in his pocket. The head waiter on the other hand, was recognized as someone in the hotel trade –the hotel manager according to the majority of the subjects. This clearly indicates the importance of background knowledge in text interpretation. Clearly, the cultural schemata necessary for the interpretation of this text did not exist for the learners and therefore, they felt the need to superimpose the schemata conditioned by their own culture onto the text. Carrell and Eisterhold's explanation seems to fit this situation neatly:

> 'One of the most obvious reasons why a particular context schema may fail to exist for a reader is that the schema is culturally specific and is not a part of a particular reader's cultural background' (1983:560).

That cultural awareness may help or hinder textual interpretation seemed indicated in yet another way. The most fluent speaker among the subjects who

belonged to experimental group 2 was aware of most of the cultural features and had no difficulty in interpreting the cartoon discussed above and also other texts.

That the interpretation of these cartoons which depicted cultural stereotypes was difficult not simply because subjects were unfamiliar with the concept of cultural stereotypes also became evident, because in the course of a discussion they showed their familiarity with the concept, by giving many examples of cultural stereotypes from Sri Lankan culture. They were also aware that cultural stereotypes were a form of exaggeration of features said to typify a culture and that cartoon humour drew heavily from these cultural stereotypes and were dependent on them to a certain extent.

It became evident that one of the most profitable ways in which culture specific materials could be introduced is in relation to the first language culture. The subjects showed a great deal of interest in discussions where parallels and contrasts with their own culture were discussed. The relationship between job satisfaction and monetary gain, the relations between children and parents, the difference in values in relation to work and differences in moral values were some of the issues which sparked off very interesting discussions.

Some of the materials had to be presented in ways different from those that the researcher had originally intended, because the subjects had very strong views about certain cultural features. For example, though the researcher originally intended to use the modern legend 'The Foreign Hotel' (unit 2) for a culture translation task, this was not possible as the subjects were positive that such an incident would never take place in a country such as India which quite a few Sri Lankans visit. The reasons they gave varied from practical ones such as inocculation against infectious diseases, the fact that most Sri Lankans who go to India on pilgrimages go in groups and that it would be very unusual for a mother and daughter to go alone, to moral issues such as the action of the hotel owners which was condemned as morally wrong. Of course it is quite possible that all these arguments were a ruse to avoid doing written work.

Still, what is of interest is that as long as subjects are able to discuss parallels and contrasts in this way, it shows that they are interested in the materials under discussion, and that this kind of activity would ultimately lead

to their gaining a degree of CA and in turn increasing their CC, both because of the knowledge gain and because of the opportunities that are provided for them to use this knowledge and also to develop skills.

Even though the subject matter of such texts as 'The Collector' and 'The Collier' (unit 1) were unfamiliar, the subjects were able to cope with them. On the whole there were very few requests for lexical clarification. Frequent requests for lexical clarification are often an indication that the subjects are finding the subject matter too difficult, as was the case with 'Leap Year' and 'Fighting for Your Marriage' (unit 3).

6.4.3.4. Learner Problems With Verbal Humour:

Apart from humorous pictures such as cartoons, there were some texts among the materials which evoked humour through the use of language, -e.g 'The Travel Bug' (unit 2) and 'Betrothal the British Way' (unit 3). The subjects' response to this type of humour was negative most of the time. The humour conveyed by the use of language was much more difficult for them to grasp than the humour conveyed in a cartoon, where what is funny is more directly visible. Visual images created by the use of language seemed to elude the subjects altogether. Even when they did have a feeling that something was 'funny' they were unable to explain why this was so. They tended to rely entirely on the text and to accept any information that occurred in the text at face value.

This difficulty in comprehending and responding to humour generated by the skillful use of language can be seen as linked with schemata availability and also perhaps with the inability to infer, and can be viewed against the background of Steffensen's work on culture specific schemata. Her discussion on the relation between schemata and language reflexes and the relationship between schemata and register are relevant here. language can be used to evoke humour in various ways: through puns, metaphors, the use of 'loaded' words, the use of inappropriate register and so on. For the native speaker who has access to the humour schema of his/her culture, on coming across a word, phrase or structure that does not conform to his/her concept of serious writing, a state of 'readiness' to process humour is generated. The native speakers' background knowledge also signals where s/he is likely to come across humour, thus making it possible to recognize an incongruous statement

in a text book, or a requirement such as 44 'A' levels in a job advertisement as being a boob. The boob itself may be hilariously funny, but the reader does not conclude that more will necessarily follow. In contrast, a statement such as '...whatever travel may do to the mind, Swiss and German food certainly broadens other parts of the body...' immediately alerts the reader to the possibility of finding more of its kind. This 'readiness' can only result from a knowledge of rhetorical conventions, register and so on. The reader needs to have access to background knowledge to be able to comprehend and respond to humour. Once again, in the case of these ESL learners, the inability to generate schemata because of the lack of CA could be regarded as a major cause for not being able to perceive and respond to verbal humour.

In addition, this difficulty in comprehending and responding to humour seem to be due to several other reasons:

1. Intense concentration on words and the 'language' which prevents them from concentrating on the meaning.

2. Learners do not expect to find anything 'funny' in their lesson material. In other words they cannot bring themselves to associate fun with language learning. It is revealing to find that the item in the questionnaire which gave one of the reasons for learning English as 'Because it is fun for me' drew a negative response from more than 50% of the subjects.

3. Learners seem to be afraid of being wrong, so they feel it is best not say anything in order to avoid saying something that sounds 'silly'.

4. Learners are unable or unwilling to let their imaginations work.

6.4.3.5. The Classroom Experiences of the Control Group:

During the six weeks in which the experimental groups were taught using the experimental teaching materials, the control groups followed their normal English proficiency classes. They had a comparable number of class hours, using the type of material normally used in their classes. Thus, being the third term, the first year law group (control group 1) had revision classes of work covered in the law level 3 classes during the previous two terms. This material was grammar and reading comprehension oriented and based on law reports, law text books and newspaper and journal articles on court proceedings and

legal matters. The first year certificate course year 1 group (control group 2) were working on prescribed lesson units which were grammar and reading based. These units include some writing speaking and listening. The texts dealing with both fact and fiction are selected from various sources, and comprehension exercises are based on these texts. The writing of letters, minutes and reports form part of their syllabus. The third year certificate course year 2 group (control group 3) were doing more advanced work of the same type as certificate course year 1. Being the final term, they too were doing revision of work done during the previous five terms in preparation for the certificate course examination scheduled to be held at the same time as their final examinations.

In the case of all three groups which made up the control group, the subject matter of the teaching materials that they were being exposed to were not specifically culture oriented. Though in the case of the certificate course students, some of the texts do come from literary and other such culture related sources, no attempt is generally made to draw the learners' attention to these cultural features, as the purpose of using these texts is to facilitate content comprehension. When it comes to listening and speaking activities, once again, these are generally linked to structure based units and do not make a special effort to introduce discourse conventions, even though the learners would be exposed to some of these conventions incidentally, but this will not be in relation to CA in the SL. The two certificate course groups would be introduced to formal letter writing conventions and the 'rules' involved in the writing of minutes and reports. In relation to such conventions, two of the three groups making up the control group would have somewhat similar experiences to that of the experimental groups. However, since writing activities form only a small part of their overall classroom activities, the time spent on these activities would be minimal.

In relation to classroom techniques, the control groups would not be exposed to the type of variety provided by the experimental materials and discussion and group work would not figure prominently in the activities of the control groups. Therefore, taking both the subject matter and the teaching techniques into consideration, it would be possible to conclude that any similarities that existed between the experiences of the experimental and control groups would have been marginal. Thus the similar performances of the two groups on the post test cannot be attributed to the similarities in the

classroom experiences of the two groups.

6.5. Observations on the Administration of the Experiment

Administering the experiment turned out to be quite an experience because of the practical problems that came up. Since these affected both the way in which the experiment was carried out and possibly also the results of the experiment, it is essential to discuss these. These observations are also important because of the light they shed on the shortcomings of the research design and on possible ways of remedying these shortcomings. These observations and insights will be outlined and discussed below.

6.5.1. Problems Encountered in Administering the Experiment:

One of the problems in conducting the experiment described above was the subjects' lack of interest in the project. On the whole the subjects gave very low priority to the experiment keeping away whenever anything they considered as more important came up during the time set aside for the experiment, or when bad weather or any other reason made it the least bit inconvenient for them to be present. It is a fact that the time was somewhat inopportune for this project as the subjects were very busy with their academic work, having missed a whole term the previous year. This was perhaps partly the reason for their lack of interest and poor participation.

Another major problem in relation to the entire experiment was that the researcher could not get as many subjects as she hoped, to volunteer to take part in the project, discussed earlier in 6.2.1.2.

The length of the test caused another major problem. Each of the 3 parts of the test required about 11/2 - 2 hours to complete. Since some of the class sessions were 1 hour and others 2 hours, the test had to be given out to each of the three different groups on 2 - 3 different occasions. This also led to difficulties as it was not easy to get the same students to do all the three parts of the test. This problem was partly due to the experimental groups being selected from among a group other than the one that was intended and partly because of the learners having extra lectures, tutorials etc. having missed a term the previous year. It was therefore, difficult to foresee this problem in designing the experiment, as under more favourable conditions this problem may not have arisen.

Since 25 of the subjects who completed the pre test did not complete 1 or 2 parts or the whole of the post test, the sample at the post test stage had shrunk still further: from 58 to 33. Most of the subjects seemed to find the post test boring, as they expected to have a different test the second time, and lost interest when they were told that it was the same test. The subjects' dislike of doing written tests came out very strongly in the post test. The responses to this section are so brief and haphazard that it is evident that the subjects were doing their best to hand in the papers and leave as quickly as possible. They seemed to find doing the same written test twice laborious. Once again, it was difficult to foresee this problem as students do sit the same test without raising objections in the normal way. The difference was that though they are willing to do this if it involved passing a required examination, they did not show the same willingness when it came to a research test that had no material benefit for them.

The second stage of the experiment too was fraught with difficulties. Due to reasons discussed earlier in this section, attendance in all three groups tended to be poor. It was not always the same subjects who absented themselves, and the composition of the class even within a group kept changing. The poor attendance and the fact that 6 of a group who turned up on any given day was liable to keep away the next day, while a different group of 6 turned up, affected the teaching adversely in that a smooth transition from one class session to another was not possible.

The poor attendance had a particularly bad effect on group work. There were days when group work had to be abandoned because the class was too small. Certain types of group work -e.g the strip story- could not be tried out with groups 2 & 3 because these groups were made up of small numbers. Group 1 with 19 subjects when everyone was present was the biggest and the most successful, when it came to group work. But even in this group, there were days when attendance was down to 6 - 7 thus making group work less interesting, as only one group could be formed. This was a great problem as most of the material was intended to be used not for individual activities but for group work.

6.5.2. Insights Gained from Administering the Experiment:

6.5.2.1. Specific Insights:

Both the pre test and the post test revealed that it was not satisfactory to administer the different parts of a test on several days. A long test consisting of several parts would be suitable only if it can be administered in one session. If this is not possible it would be better to use another test, or a shorter version.

It is not easy to organize an experiment of this type without taking into account the unforeseen practical difficulties that have to be contended with. What looks perfectly practicable in one situation becomes impracticable in another. It also became evident that it is not expedient to undertake too ambitious a project without being aware of the reactions of the prospective subjects. A researcher's enthusiasm may blind her to the lack of enthusiasm that she may encounter among would-be subjects.

The negative response to the post test revealed some very interesting facts. From what this experiment revealed a post test does not seem ideal for language testing in some situations, because of the unpredictability of the subjects' reaction.

The purpose of administering a post test in this particular experiment was to see whether the teaching experiment which went before had had any effect on the subjects' CC as gauged by the test. In the case of this particular post test it became increasingly difficult to make that judgement because most of the subjects seem to have made no effort to do their best, while at the pre test stage, they had done their best. This becomes evident in several sections of the test. In the WST which was cited earlier, the picture description task elicited a much better response in the pre test than in the post test. At the pre test most subjects wrote 5 - 6 sentences describing the picture, while the more proficient subjects wrote 10 - 12 or more sentences. At the post test even some of the latter stopped short with 4 - 5 sentences. This shows that they were unwilling rather than unable to write down this information.

Most subjects attempted only one part of question 3 (letter writing) at the post test. Since the multiple choice section drew a better response this seems to indicate that they were particularly bored when forced to attempt something

which they did not like, a second time. A MCT, especially with a large number of items, may not look exactly the same, the way a writing test does, and subjects may also decide on different options the second time. Even so, as some of them stated they would find an entirely different paper more interesting.

When the experiment was designed the researcher had certain preconceptions about the available sample and the time duration over which the experiment would be carried out. In practice these preconceptions did not prove to be well founded and needed modification.

The major change; the considerably reduced sample comprising two different groups as opposed to the large sample from one group which was originally planned, affected both the way in which the experiment was carried out, and also the responses of the subjects.

It was only to be expected that the materials formulated for the certificate course would not be quite the right materials for the level 3 students. The test too would be more difficult for these students. However, there was not a great deal of disparity as the texts that the law students found difficult were also difficult for the arts students, especially the third year arts students. On the whole the law first years compared favourably with the arts third years. This was interesting, because these arts students too had begun at level three in their first year. The third years were able to comprehend better and to respond more quickly. This could be attributed to the exposure to English they have had during the three years they have attended English classes at the university.

Apart from the framework of the experiment, other details too had to be altered to make the experiment practicable. All three groups could not be given a uniform number of teaching hours because the experiment had to be carried out during the teaching hours allocated for English, and these were different both according to year and faculty. Thus, first year law students had 14 hours of English per week, while arts first years had 10 and arts third years 5. Thus, the same amount of work could not be done with each group, each week. The units had to be completed faster with the third years as they had only 5 teaching hours per week. In this way the amount of teaching possible within a unit differed from one group to another.

6.5.2.2. General Insights Gained from Administering the Experiment:

A pre test post test design using the same test was selected for this experiment as being potentially a more effective design in that such a design makes it possible to test hypotheses more rigorously than a post test only design. However, as the results of this investigation indicates, for this type of research design to work, research conditions have to be ideal, and that certainly was not the case with this experiment. The alternatives to a pre test post test design do not allow the rigorous hypotheses testing possible in this design, but are more practicable in far from ideal research situations. The post test only design is one possible alternative. This design does away with the problem of having to administer a test twice, but is a less powerful design because no comparison with pre test performance is possible. On the other hand, if the pre test post test design is retained, a mismatch occurring between the pre test and the post test performance because of subject inattentiveness at the post test stage can be controlled by using a parallel rather than an identical test. However, in order to control any differences in the pre test post test performance due to a difference in the tests, it is necessary to spend a great deal of time in designing parallel tests in order to avoid this non-equivalence and it is also necessary to pilot test such tests very carefully.

The particular test that was used (Bachman and Palmer's test of Communicative Competence) was selected as the test instrument in this investigation because of the difficulty of developing a new test specially for this purpose and because Bachman and Palmer's tests were based on comparable theoretical constructs as discussed in 6.2.2.1.1. Bachman and Palmer's tests had been pilot tested and subsequently tested by them using a large sample. However, though comparable in some ways, Bachman and Palmer's population was different to the intended Sri Lankan learner population in other ways. Though the test was modified to suit the Sri Lankan sample as discussed in 6.2.2.1.2, the Sri Lankan subjects' response to the test brought the suitability of the SRT into question. As discussed in 6.2.2.2, the lengthy instructions that precede each section of the tests and the actual length of the tests also posed problems. Because of the conditions under which the investigation was conducted it was not possible to pilot test the revised version with a Sri Lankan sample. If piloting had been possible, some of these problems could have been foreseen and therefore, circumvented. This seems

to emphasize the need to pilot any research test in each new situation as the successful results in one situation do not gurantee success in another situation.

Notes

1. The names of all the subjects were written on slips of paper and separated according to sex into two groups. This was in order to make sure that there were equal numbers of both sexes in the experimental group. Half the slips from each of the two groups were then picked at random.

2. The first section of the WST was not administered during this experiment because, it had got inadvertently left out, when the test was sent to the researcher.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

7.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to discuss the wider implications of the findings of the investigation described in chapter 6. In section 7.2, CA in language teaching and CC as a goal in ESL in the light of the findings will be discussed. The implications of this investigation for the specific ESL situation under study -ESL in Sri Lanka at the tertiary level- will be discussed (section 7.3). The findings of the investigation will be briefly discussed in relation to SLD theory (7.4), and some suggestions for further research and development based on this investigation that would benefit ESL in Sri Lanka will be briefly outlined (7.5).

7.2. The Implications of the Study for the Concept of CA and Communicative Competence in ESL

7.2.1. Cultural Awareness in ESL:

Though a needs analysis view of language teaching often tends to dismiss CA as irrelevant to the needs of the average learner who has no integrative motivation, insights gained from research areas such as Schema Theory, Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics seem to suggest the opposite, because of the relationship of CA to sociolinguistic competence as discussed in 5.3. Studies in story schema, (Kintsh and Greene 1978:1-13, Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson 1984:10-29, Carrell 1983:81-92, 1984:87-113, Carrell and Wallace 1983:295-308), and in speech acts and pragmatics, (Fraser and Rintell 1980:77, Blum-Kulka 1983:37, Olshtain and Cohen 1983:19) for instance, point very strongly to the importance of CA in the knowledge of and the ability to use language. These findings seem to support strongly the need to make learners aware of cultural features underlying the sociolinguistic knowledge which makes it possible to use the language appropriately.

Since in the case of native speakers, culture conditioned conventions governing the appropriate use of language are acquired rather than learnt, it is a controversial issue as to whether these could be consciously taught in

situations where it is not possible to acquire them unconsciously by drawing the learners' attention to the underlying culture, or in fact in any other way. Certain features about sociolinguistic competence seem to indicate that this is indeed possible. As discussed in 4.3.2.1, in using language what is produced and comprehended most of the time are not *unique* utterances, but routines and formulae. This is one factor that does seem to support this possibility. Goffman pinpoints this when he says in relation to apologies,

> 'Whether one runs over another's sentence, time, dog or body, one is more or less reduced to saying some variant of 'I'm sorry!'' (Goffman quoted in Fraser 1981:262).

Furthermore, the almost instinctive response to routines such as 'I'm sorry' is brought out in an anecdote from the film 'A thousand clowns', cited by Tannen and Oztek (1981:37), in which a character who walks up to various people and offers them apologies for no reason, still receives the pre-patterned response from them. In addition, compliments (Wolfson and Manes 1981, Wolfson 1983), conversational gambits (Keller 1981, Richards 1983), greetings (Laver 1981) and apologies (Fraser 1981, Edmondson 1981) are largely formulaic, and formulaic language is easier to 'pin down' than other forms of language.

The other factor, is the more obvious one of there being many successful bilinguals who are communicatively competent to varying degrees in a language other than their MT, being in possession of both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence.

If because of its relationship to sociolinguistic competence CA needs to be an integral part of language teaching, and if it is possible to hypothesize that it can be taught, it is worthwhile to consider what the findings of the present investigation imply in such a context.

On the negative side, there is the fact that this investigation did not come up with statistically significant evidence to support the hypothesis that increased CA leads to improved CC via improved sociolinguistic competence. On the positive side, the investigation did reveal that sociolinguistic competence seemed to be what was mostly lacking in the average learner who took part in this investigation, a finding supported by other researchers (Canale 1983:13).

If sociolinguistic competence is a problem area, and an experiment which sets out to try the efficacy of a scheme aiming to improve the learners' CA does not yield the desired results, that poses many questions. These questions were discussed in detail in chapter 6.3, but specially because of its relationship to the crucial part of the experiment -the teaching materials- one of these questions seem to be worthy of considering again here: can CA result from teaching? If so, how?

The investigation does shed some light on this area: it revealed that,

1. testing CA and sociolinguistic competence in relation to what is taught is not an easy task and therefore, making judgements about learner achievement is difficult

2. culture material could be incorporated into ESL material successfully as indicated in the learner response to the teaching material used in the experiment

3. it is not impossible to consciously teach sociolinguistic conventions and to provide the opportunities for improving the learners' ability to use these

4. it is difficult to improve sociolinguistic competence in adults through teaching, over a short period of time

The point about testing will be discussed in 7.2.1.2.

7.2.1.1. The Difficulty of Teaching Sociolinguistic Conventions and CA:

As the investigation revealed, the difficulty of teaching sociolinguistic conventions by making learners culturally aware arises not so much because of the inability of getting learners interested in culture related materials, but in deciding on what to teach and how to teach it. This investigation made use of one possible format: that of the thematic design. In selecting topics to be included in the thematic design, there was a wide variety to choose from and of these a selection was made of topics that were felt to be particularly conducive for achieving the objective of the experiment, among this particular type of learners.

In an experiment carried out over a short period of time, it is possible to expose learners to a few cultural topics and to a small range of sociolinguistic conventions, but this does not necessarily guarantee that the learners' CA would improve by some given measure. Any improvement would be dependent

not merely on the input, but also on how much opportunity there is for this information to be assimilated, and still more important –to be used. Once again, though it is possible to provide practice through classroom activities the opportunities for use are still limited. The hope of significant improvement requires input spread over a long period of time, with plenty of opportunity for revision in the form of repetitive exposure and use.

Much of the difficulty of teaching the use conventions associated with cultural features arises out of this need for input in the form of repetitive exposure and repetitive use, over a long period of time. Unlike in the case of a particular grammatical structure or vocabulary item, the 'meaning' of a particular use convention cannot be exhausted by teaching it for a day or a term, because unlike in the case of grammatical structures which remain consistent across situations and topics, use conventions take on different meanings in different contexts. Culture conditioned use conventions need to be taught through fairly constant exposure and practice.

Though a thematic structure is certainly a good way of bringing CA into the classroom for the reasons discussed in 5.4, it is somewhat optimistic to expect experimental teaching material to produce outstanding results in a short time, as even with optimum opportunities for exposure and practice the amount of information that can be conveyed is limited. In the case of experimental materials there is also the problem that the methods employed may not be the most satisfactory, as the most effective texts and techniques could be discovered only through pilot testing the materials rigorously.

Though the topics dealt with in the materials used in this experiment are culture conditioned, the themes themselves are universal. The investigation revealed that learners find it fairly easy to respond to highly culture specific material, when introduced through themes that are universal. A thematic structure for introducing culture specific material has many advantageous and is to be recommended because:

1. it blends the familiar and the unfamiliar
2. it allows opportunity for comparison.

Apart from the format tried out in this experiment, it would be possible to use a design which is substantially different and which would possibly yield

different results. Some possible designs that could be used are:

1. Culture material infused into a structural design
2. CA incorporated into a discoursal model
3. CA in relation to a speech act based design
4. 1, 2, 3 above blended with a thematic design.

The fourth of the above designs is not very different to what was attempted in the revised experimental materials except for grammatical structures not being particularly concentrated on and the speech acts and discourse being brought into the unit depending on the openings provided by the thematic texts. If using a design of the type suggested above, it would be necessary to select texts which not only illustrate a theme and provide opportunities for illustrating sociolinguistic conventions linked to the theme, but which also illustrate well and provide opportunities to practice particular types of speech acts and discourse types which have been consciously selected for presentation. These different designs have certain advantages, and at the same time certain disadvantages.

To take the structural design first, though culture specific material could be taught through this type of design, the need to grade structural materials, often limits the type of cultural (or other) information that could be introduced in a particular unit, and this restricts variation within a unit. On the positive side, this would enable culture materials to be graded in some way, thus avoiding the possibility of having materials in a unit, that learners of a particular level cannot cope with. In a thematic design, there are no particular criteria that could be used for the purpose of grading materials other than difficulty levels of concepts, argumentation and vocabulary based on awareness of the learners' proficiency level. Thus, in this type of design, the grading of structures would provide a rationale for grading the culture specific material to some extent. The possibility of having to discard material at a later stage could thus be avoided. However, as mentioned earlier being limited to certain linguistic structures is very restricting and would not be facilitative for presenting the variety of material that is necessary to be presented in a CC approach.

If using a discoursal model, it would be necessary to guard against equating discourse with speech. As Saville-Troike rightly points out, this

problem arises in many discussions of CC too, as CC is regarded as being synonymous with actual speech interaction. Saville-Troike points out that this is certainly not the case, as CC means more than just face to face interaction.

> 'Some researchers are restricting their use of 'Communicative' to apply only to direct personal interaction, rather than all uses (and non-uses) of language and other symbolic systems' (Saville-Troike 1983:132).

Another problem with discourse material is that just in the case of thematic material there is so much variety available and no set criteria for grading materials. To design a course based on a discoursal model in which the materials are not just a haphazard selection, but are coherently linked in some way would require a great deal of research and pilot testing. On the positive side, a discoursal model could be very satisfactory because it would deal with the living language. Since CA comes into prominence because of its need in the actual use of language, it could be possible to incorporate CA as it occurs in real use situations, in such a design.

In this type of design too, there is the question of organization. How is such a course to be structured? One solution would be to organize the material according to a series of discourse situations structured on an easy to difficult basis, but deciding on what is easy and what is difficult poses a problem. Once again, this would become somewhat easier, if the course is spread over a long period. However, it is difficult to say whether such a design would give better results than a thematic design during a short period of time.

Recent research on speech acts, emphasizes the importance of this area in language acquisition and language learning. Since there seems to be very definite links between the realization of speech acts and CA, this would be a promising area to work on. Since communication in different forms could be broken down into direct or indirect 'speech acts' of one type or another, it would be possible to design a course to teach CA by making speech acts the coordinating factor. The problem about designing courses based on speech acts (as has been done in notional functional syllabus design) is that such syllabuses tend to to be restrictive in the same way as structural syllabuses. The difficulty of ending up with 'lists' of things to introduce and practice in a given session is difficult to avoid, because of the need for repetitive exposure to the speech acts in question. If using such a design, it would require a great

deal of thought in order to decide how best the material could be presented to the learners without killing their enthusiasm and turning the class sessions in to a grind. Therefore, in the case of such a design too, it would be necessary to extend it over a considerable period.

The three types of design described above could also be used in conjunction with a thematic structure, and perhaps this would be the best design for a short term course. A thematic structure does not necessarily lead to the grading of materials, and this grading could be provided by the structural, discoursal or speech act component or all of these.

In considering any kind of design for teaching sociolinguistic conventions through CA, one becomes forcefully aware of the immensity of the task. As discussed in detail in 4.3, both culture and CA do not lend themselves to clear cut definitions and sociolinguistic competence cannot be 'set down' like linguistic rules. CA is a myriad of things, and even making learners aware of a sample of it, is quite a formidable task. That sociolinguistic competence and CA which underlies it is essential for successful language use is quite evident. That it cannot be achieved over a short period of time is equally evident. What seems to be the most appropriate course to follow, is to incorporate the teaching of sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge into ESL at every level and spread it over a considerable period of time.

7.2.1.2. Testing Communicative Competence:

If teaching CA and sociolinguistic conventions is problematic, testing CC is more so. The problems in testing CC are widely discussed in the literature (Davies 1978:223, Howard 1980:272–289, Couchrene and Bagheera 1981:57–69, Stern 1981:77–94, Wesche 1981:551–571, Horowitz 1983, Fischer 1984:13–20 and Rea 1985:15–32). While it is possible to test specific vocabulary items, specific grammatical structures, specific sound systems and so on, in testing CC and especially the sociolinguistic aspect of CC, it is difficult to isolate items for testing exactly in the same way. Just as in teaching CA, what is taught is at best a sample, in testing CC *all* that could be tested is a sample. It would be pointless to test particular conversational gambits, or routines or specific cultural assumptions underlying the use of these sociolinguistic conventions specifically taught in class, as this would enable the test only to make the assumption that the subjects know these particular items and not that they are

really in possession of some measure of CC; that they are able to use these in interactive, communicative situations. At best, what could be done is the matching of one sample against the other, and this may not always prove satisfactory.

Though this would be a very difficult task, as Simich-Dudgeon and Rivera (1983:117) point out, an ethnographic approach to language testing, where assessment consists of observing a learner in the community, home and school, would perhaps be the most suitable form of testing in relation to CC. By observing someone in different environments, it would be possible to gauge their CC in a way, that would not be possible in other forms of testing. Though this type of testing may be possible in a research project, it would not be possible in normal ESL or other language teaching situations. Since it is only through actual use that competence could really be gauged, any form of 'artificial' task would not really be a satisfactory indicator. It is known that even among speakers of a MT, acknowledged skill and actual performance do not often match. Acknowledged skill conforms to expected norms, but actual performance does not always match expected norms because of individual differences in CC (the CC continuum discussed in 3.3) and the level of automaticity with which different individuals are able to use their linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge. Conscious analytic judgements about sociolinguistic conventions could involve 'monitoring' just as much as in the case of linguistic rules.

In the case of testing CC in ESL or other language teaching situations, it is necessary to settle for a less than perfect form of testing. Still, it is very important to test actual use in a test of CC, involving communication at all four levels: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Hence the disadvantage of not being able to include the oral component of the test in the present investigation. Though it may not be possible to devise a test that would be as good a gauge as an ethnographic type of test, it would still be possible to design a test that would approximate this type of test. The competence performance distinction does not hold when it comes to CC testing as Rea points out (1985:20), as competence could be gauged only through performance. This would be a very important area for future research.

The problem of grading encountered in designing materials to teach sociolinguistic competence, also comes into focus in the testing of CC. As

revealed in the results of this investigation, the graded level of difficulty of the sociolinguistic items in the test did not correspond to the pattern found in the subjects' responses, unlike in the case of linguistic items (discussed in 6.3). In teaching and testing CA, a mismatch between the teaching sample and the testing sample could also cause problems. Poor results in such a case may be due to the learners being unaware of many of the particular cultural references used in a particular test. Though a test using a sample certainly does differentiate between the highly proficient and those completely lacking in proficiency, it does not give an accurate picture of the competence of the large group which fall into the middle range.

Though much research has gone into methods of testing CC, and there is a good deal of published material on the subject, still more needs to be done in this area. The reason for the rather slow developments in CC testing are partially due to the lack of agreement about the theoretical framework of CC (discussed in Chapter 3). When there is lack of agreement about basic issues such as the components of CC, or whether CC does or or does not include the ability to use linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, other associated areas are bound to be slow in developing. Canale (1983:2) referring to the confusion that exists regarding CC theory states that,

> 'The reasons for concern are not only that there remains much disagreement and little careful research on the application of CC in second language pedagogy. Rather, within Applied Linguistics one also finds both confusion and lack of consideration of many of the basic concepts involved in this notion' (Canale 1983:2).

One aspect of this problem, the competence performance distinction is discussed at length by Rea (ibid:20–23).

Though CC is a combination of linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence, and in an actual language use situation these two would occur together rather than separately, in testing, these aspects are often tested separately. Canale and Swain (1980:1–47), claim that tests of components of CC measure different abilities. Though different aspects are isolated for the purposes of testing, it is questionable whether some competence in one aspect of CC could be regarded as a sign of CC in general. The question then arises whether someone like the adult subject in Schmidt's study (1983:137–174), who

has a degree of sociolinguistic competence but almost negligible grammatical competence could be regarded as being communicatively competent.

It does not seem to be unrealistic to think in terms of a test where the grammatical component and the sociolinguistic component could complement each other. Bachman and Palmer while subscribing to Canale and Swain's view in relation to components of CC testing different abilities, attempt to bring together the different components by using a multitrait-multimethod design. It is possible to test some grammatical features in relation to particular areas of sociolinguistic competence. For example, politeness in English is related to the grammatical component of modality. Therefore, it does not seem to be far fetched to suppose, that improvement in that particular sociolinguistic aspect should also lead to an increased competence in the use of modality. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that grammatical competence in the use of modals does not necessarily mean a perfect command of politeness norms, as this would require CA in addition.

As the results of this investigation reveal, it is possible to have more competence in one area (i.e. grammatical competence) and less in the other, but this is in relation to those whose CC is generally low. In the case of those whose CC is high, the linguistic and sociolinguistic competence is comparable. From the findings in Schmidt's study, it seems that while less sociolinguistic competence would be the normal situation among learners of a SL/FL, who study the language in a formal teaching/learning situation, the opposite is true of those who do not get (and also disregard) formal instruction, and acquire what competence they possess from actual use. In the case of both groups, the level of competence cannot be rated as very high.

The importance of the relationship between course design and testing is also worthwhile considering in relation to the findings of this investigation. It was discussed earlier (6.3), that the outcome of the experiment itself could be partly due to a mismatch between the test and the teaching materials. Davies (1985:5) discusses the need to relate syllabus design to testing instead of constructing syllabuses to conform to a test. In the case of the teaching materials used in this experiment, no attempt was made to conform the teaching materials to the test. Though thus able to avoid the risk of the materials being narrowly conditioned by the test, the possibility of there being a mismatch between the test and the teaching materials could not be avoided.

The development of a test side by side with the materials would enhance greatly the possibility of these teaching materials being more successful. Unlike in some other language teaching situations discussed by Davies (op. cit.), there is no pressure to conform to a particular test in the ESL situation investigated here. Therefore, it is possible to develop a syllabus and a test that are related in order to maximize the usefulness of the teaching materials that implement the syllabus. Rea (op. cit.) argues that assessment should be made an integral part of learning and it is Swain's view that tests that make use of the 'information gap' ensures the occurrence of 'real' communication (1985:40). Learners do tend to consider tests as merely 'exercises' (see 6.4 in relation to the writing test), and the developments of tests that involve activities that would not be regarded merely as exercises would be a great contribution.

7.3. Implications of the Investigation for ESL in Sri Lanka

Though it did not provide statistically significant results that support the hypotheses that were investigated, the teaching experiment revealed that CC was not an unrealistic goal, for ESL in Sri Lanka. CC encompasses the different aspects of language knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge, the acquisition of which would greatly benefit Sri Lankan learners. As Saville-Troike points out CC involves,

> 'receptive as well as productive faculty, written as well as verbal behaviours. CC further involves language appropriate socio-cultural schemata, or the social and cultural knowledge and expressions that speaker/hearer, reader/writer are presumed to have which enables them to use interpersonal communicative forms' (Saville-Troike 1983:131).

Far from responding negatively to the culture related texts in the lesson materials used in the experiment, the subjects showed a lively interest in the themes that were introduced in this way. The potential value of such novel material was convincingly brought out in the extent to which such material generated active participation in language use via discussions that the subjects took part in. In addition, these discussions provided the opportunities necessary for the learners to use what linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge they possessed plus the newly learnt information. By providing opportunities for practice, these discussions proved a satisfactory medium for facilitating automaticity and fluency in the learners' ability to use linguistic and

sociolinguistic knowledge. By proving suitable for diverse activities, the culture materials also revealed their suitability for promoting skill development.

The scope for variety provided by the SL culture materials was illustrated during the course of this experiment. The fact that subjects did not evince dislike of, or lack of interest in features of a different cultural background is also of interest. The response of these subjects, and other evidence in the literature -e.g Gunaratne (1981), shows that there is no need to fear a hostile reaction to such material from adult Sri Lankan students.

The favourable response of the subjects could possibly be linked with the positive reasons for studying English selected by the subjects in response to the questionnaire. According to the responses to the questionnaire provided by the subjects, Sri Lankan undergraduates wish to learn English for material gain such as opportunities to qualify for well paid jobs or to go in for higher education leading to professional qualifications. On the other hand, their positive responses also showed that they are also interested in getting to know more about what goes on in the rest of the world, and to participate in enjoyable activities and make use of things such as books, radio and TV that require a knowledge of English (see appendix 1.5). This too supports a CC goal in ESL rather than a narrowly subject specific goal.

The success of some of the teaching techniques used in the experiment, is also important in designing course material for ESL students in Sri Lanka. Though initially, the subjects took time to adjust to a different approach in the classroom, their positive response to group work, speech and listening activities was a vote in favour of English classes in which they did not merely 'learn' English, but used it. The classroom observations made during the period of experimental teaching, strongly support the introduction of discussion and activity based classroom sessions at the tertiary level as a viable proposition.

The results of the WST, and observations made during the teaching sessions point to the need for finding ways and means of getting the learners to write in English in and outside the class. This is certainly a difficult task, since the learners have gone through years of English teaching before they get to the university with little or no chance to do much writing.

The most satisfactory way to bring about a change in the learners' negative attitude towards writing is to introduce writing in an attractive manner at the

school level. As for the learners at the tertiary level, writing should be made a compulsory part of English teaching at all levels. Perhaps the best way to bring about a change in their attitude, will be by getting them to write things that are of some practical use and not mere 'exercises'. Getting arts and law students to write some of their tutorials in English and getting them to fill in forms regarding university examinations etc. in English, might be one way of accomplishing this.

Some scheme such as contact with undergraduates of another country might also be useful. Organizing an 'English Association' and getting the learners to take the responsibility of writing papers to be presented at the meetings of the association, becoming office bearers and writing the minutes, reports of the association etc. might be another possible way of getting the learners to do some writing in English. Getting any such scheme under way is fraught with difficulties, but it would be worthwhile to attempt it.

In the preceding section an attempt was made to outline the implications of the investigation described in this thesis, to the ESL situation at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. Though conducted in circumstances in which practical problems were legion, the investigation did lead to certain positive insights which could be applied for the improvement of ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. Apart from the implications that the results of this investigation have on pedagogical matters, the insights gained from conducting this research are also important in undertaking future applied linguistic research in Sri Lanka. The points that emerge very strongly as the ones that need to be considered by anyone undertaking this type of research are: the need for

1. research projects spread over longer periods allowing for possible interruptions

2. less complicated and less ambitious research designs more suited to less ideal research environments

3. careful planning which makes some provision for unforeseen changes that may need to be made in the research design at short notice.

The results of this investigation though far from ideal from a statistical point of view, are nevertheless of interest because of the positive insights they provide about ways and means of improving ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. The

classroom experiment also indicates that though the results do not reach statistical significance this does not not necessarily invalidate the hypothesis regarding the relationship between CA and CC. Certain insights from SLD research also support this position. These insights will be discussed briefly in the next section.

7.4. Findings of the Investigation in Relation to SLD Theory

Major SLD theoretic explanations such as the place of acquisition in SLD and the different types of processes involved in SLD while not being particularly helpful in dealing with the type of problem investigated in this study are not incompatible with either the theoretical constructs or their practical implementation in this investigation. There are also some specific areas in SLD theory that provide evidence which supports the theoretical position and its practical implementation in this thesis. These specific areas will be briefly outlined below.

In the approach suggested in the thesis for the improvement of the CC of ESL learners, both conscious teaching and unconscious 'learning' form an intrinsic part. Given the nature of the type of knowledge (sociolinguistic knowledge) and the ability to use this knowledge that the teaching hopes to achieve, the question whether SL instruction could achieve this is a question worth considering in relation to SLD theoretic findings. There is first the question whether there is any evidence that SL instruction makes a difference in general and secondly, whether it makes a difference in relation to the specific types of knowledge and ability discussed in this thesis. According to Long, there is evidence that SL instruction does make a difference in language competence particularly in relation to specific types of groups:

> '....there is considerable evidence to indicate that SL instruction does make a difference... the effects of instruction hold (1) for children as well as as adults (2) for intermediate and advanced students (3) on integrative as well as discrete point tests and (4) in acquisition rich as well as acquisition poor environments' (Long 1983:374).

The subjects in the present study who were adults of a comparatively advanced level and living in an acquisition poor environment must benefit from SL instruction according to Long's findings. What Long means by 'instruction' however is not very clear.

The next question is how important the knowledge gained by such instruction isin the language development process. Ellis supports the view that learnt knowledge is important. He goes on to indicate that learnt knowledge should not be viewed as some residual variety. He disagrees with the view that learnt knowledge plays only a minor role in SLD.

> '[It has been argued that] because learnt knowledge cannot be converted into 'acquired' knowledge, consciousness raising and formal practice have only a minor role to play in SLD' (1984:152)

He argues that this is a false position and goes on to suggest that,

> 'An alternative to conceptualizing the interface [between acquired and learnt knowledge] as 'seepage' is to view the role of 'learnt' knowledge as sensitizing the learner to rules which can then be more easily 'acquired' (ibid:153)

These views are interesting as they strengthen the position of the conscious teaching advocated in this thesis.

Though SLD research does not specifically deal with sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use sociolinguistic knowledge in great detail, the research findings of some SLD theorists do shed some light on this issue. As discussed earlier in 4.3, 'formulaic language' has engaged the interest of many SLD theorists. Formulaic language use is one of the important aspects brought consciously and unconsciously to the learners' awareness, discussed and practised in class in using the teaching material discussed in this thesis. Therefore, the findings in SLD theory which focus attention on the importance of formulaic language and prefabricated patterns and chunks in language comprehension and production is important in relation to this study because of the way in which these language forms are linked with culture. Apart from discussing the importance of formulaic language in relation to the SLD process, some SLD theorists argue the need to consider formulaic language in relation to CC and for the need to teach formulaic language in ESL classes. Because of the ability of formulaic language to reduce the learners' processing burden and because of the less certain possibility of it aiding the development of the creative rule system, Ellis feels that formulaic language should receive serious consideration by SLD theorists and in SL teaching programmes. He goes on to

state that,

> '...irrespective of whether 'familiar sentences' evolve into rules for performing 'novel sentences', formulaic speech is in itself an important aspect of CC. The weak position alone warrants playing close attention to the place of formulaic speech in an instructional programme' (ibid:79).

In addition to arguing the need to include formulaic language in SL teaching Ellis presents some evidence in relation to his research that formulaic language could be mastered through successful teaching (ibid:80). This finding is of great interest in relation to the procedures adopted for improving sociolinguistic competence in the experimental materials.

SLD research also sheds some light on the feasibility of teaching *about* the language in relation to the role of implicit and explicit knowledge. Sharwood Smith (1981:162) discusses talking 'about' language in relation to consciousness raising in SL learners, suggesting that explicit knowledge does have a role to play in SLD. In developing the teaching materials, the importance of explicit knowledge and teaching about the language was one of the factors that guided especially the methods and techniques. The predilection on the part of the adult learner to query why something happens the way it does is a strong argument in favour of including some information about the language in ESL teaching materials designed for adult learners.

7.5. Suggestions for Further Research by Repeating the Experiment:

In order to test further the relationship between CA and CC, it would be desirable to repeat this experiment in a revised form. The present study indicates that the type of research design adopted in this investigation requires to be conducted under rigorously controlled conditions in order to be successful. Some of the conditions that need to be controlled are:

1. The subjects' level of proficiency: it would prove to be a more worthwhile experiment, if the subjects were of a fairly advanced level of proficiency, as the teaching materials are designed for such a group. If groups of differing abilities are used each group should be large enough to make between groups comparisons possible.

2. The number of subjects: in order to make valid assumptions about the population, it would be best if there were a

substantial number of subjects, e.g 80-100.

3. The attendance at all teaching sessions should be consistent, with all the experimental subjects being present at a high percentage of the teaching sessions.

4. Number of teaching sessions: at least two, two hour class sessions should be spent on each unit. It would be helpful if it were possible to spend longer on each unit.

5. Duration of the teaching experiment: the teaching experiment should be conducted over a longer period of time -preferably 4-6 months.

However, as the investigation also reveals, given the conditions under which research has to be conducted in ESL situations such as Sri Lanka, it would be rather difficult to meet all these requirements.

In repeating the experiment it would also be necessary to revise the experimental design and the instruments. There are several ways in which this could be done:

1. Modifying the design of the experiment: to avoid bad performance through boredom, the pre test/post test design could be replaced by a post test only design or a parallel test could be developed as the post test instrument.

2. Inclusion of an oral component: since the classwork in the teaching experiment gives discussion a prominent place, an oral component could be included in the test.

3. Test length: a shorter version of the test could be used if it is not possible to hold the different parts of the test on the same day, or alternatively, arrangements made for all the components of the test to be administered on the same day.

4. Self rating scale: the self rating scale could be revised to give subjects a wider choice of options.

Bachman and Palmer's test was used in this experiment because of the practical difficulty of designing a tailormade test for the experiment. As discussed in 6.2.2 and also in 6.3.2.4 certain problems arose because of the test not being specifically suited for the population under study. For example, as discussed in 6.3.2.2.3 some parts of the test such as the SRT were found to be not particularly useful in gauging the CC of Sri Lankan ESL learners. For best

results it would be necessary to develop a test suited to the ESL situation in Sri Lanka. In designing such a test insights gained from this investigation would be useful. Some of the areas worth considering in relation to a tailormade research test are:

1. Giving more weight to items testing CA
2. The possibility of employing ethnographic assessment (discussed in 7.2.1.2 above)
3. The possibility of developing parallel tests
4. The feasibility of excluding self rating.

Though a test developed specifically taking into account the situational needs and available research findings would be the ideal for this kind of experiment, it would not be possible to combine it with materials development and the testing of these materials in experimental classes unless the research is carried out over several years.

In repeating the experiment it would also be feasible to use revised teaching materials (revised according to the model suggested in 5.4, 5.5).

Considering the information this investigation reveals regarding the importance of sociolinguistic competence in the CC of ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, it is possible to hypothesize that if an experiment could be designed according to a revised form taking these different aspects into consideration there is a fair possibility of such an experiment yielding positive results.

7.6. Conclusions

In this chapter an attempt was made to outline the theoretical and practical implications of the investigation and to suggest further research areas related to this investigation that may prove beneficial for ESL in Sri Lanka. These implications and suggestions could be summarized as follows:

1. The highlighting of the area of sociolinguistic competence as a problem area for ESL learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka signals the need to take this area into consideration in developing ESL courses for these learners.

2. The observations made during the teaching experiment and the insights provided by SLD theory and research areas such as schema theory and pragmatics indicate some of the causes for the communication problems of these learners and suggests ways and means for resolving these.

3. The type of practical difficulties involved in conducting research in far from ideal conditions brought to light by this investigation indicates the need for less ambitious and more flexible research designs in such situations.

4. The learner responses to the texts and techniques used in the teaching materials justify the choice of these materials as being appropriate for learners of this particular ESL situation.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to summarize and to attempt to explain what has been discussed in this thesis. The ESL background, the theoretical constructs and the hypotheses which gave rise to this investigation will be briefly reviewed (8.2). In section 8.3, the research findings will be briefly summarized. The impact that the research findings have had on the researcher's hypotheses will be considered (8.4).

8.2. Summary of the Issues Underlying this Investigation

8.2.1. ESL at the Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka:

The investigation came into being because of the pedagogical needs of a particular language teaching situation –ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. During the time that the research has been in progress, the ESL situation in Sri Lanka, has remained much the same. The problems encountered by the ESL students at the tertiary level as the writer noted during her field work in 1984, remain more or less the same. The need to improve ESL among learners at the tertiary level and at other levels of the educational system still remains a priority. The need to improve English has in fact grown in importance, because of English moving towards being given the status of a national language.

The basic problem faced by the learners at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, is their inability to use the SL for interaction and communication, even after several years of English instruction. They have difficulty in reading reference or other material in the SL and also in using the SL in planned and unplanned discourse.

8.2.2. The Theoretical Explanation of the Problems Faced by ESL Learners at the Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka:

As discussed in 4.1, SLD theory offers several explanations for the above mentioned problem. While providing some important insights into the problem, these SLD explanations do not provide a complete solution. Outside the classroom, most of these learners live in an acquisition poor environment and

though they have gone through several years of English teaching before they come to the university, the opportunities for SLD through use during this time have been minimal. The emphasis on reading and grammar and on vocabulary teaching do not provide the type of environment that is suitable for the development of unplanned discourse skills. Even when it comes to grammar and vocabulary, the emphasis falls heavily on teaching linguistic knowledge and not so much on the ability to use this knowledge in real discourse. Therefore, even learners who show signs of possessing a degree of linguistic knowledge in their language test performance, are still not able to make use of this knowledge for practical application. Though according to SLD theory formal grammatical learning should enable learners to use this knowledge at least in planned discourse, this does not prove to be the case with these learners. The lack of opportunity for real use both inside and outside the classroom which disables language development could be held responsible for this situation.

In addition to the explanations such as the lack of a satisfactory environment for SLD and the type of teaching materials used being narrowly limited to the development of linguistic knowledge and not geared towards cultivating the processes necessary for successful language use suggested by SLD theory, the failure to take account of sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge, an explanation that does not receive much consideration among SLD theorists could be another possible explanation of the Sri Lankan ESL learners' communication problem.

8.2.3. The Urgent Need of a Solution to this Problem:

It is essential for ESL learners at the tertiary level to acquire CC. During the 3-4 years they spend at the university, they need to have access to reference material in their different subjects published only in English. This is one of the immediate needs. In addition, during their time at university they need to prepare for the time when they will be called upon to use English for interaction and communication in professions and services, at the conclusion of their studies. Their proficiency in English, or the lack of it, would affect the chances of these students getting employment. This is the long term consideration that has to be kept in view.

In order to help these learners to make progress in their academic work at the university, and at the same time to help them in their future prospects of

employment, and to prepare them for the type of interactive communicative situations in which they will find themselves on going into employment, it is urgently necessary to find the means of improving their CC in English.

8.2.4. Measures Suggested for Improving ESL at the Tertiary Level in Sri Lanka:

In this study it was suggested that the lack of sociolinguistic competence may well be a major cause for the Sri Lankan ESL learners' communication problems. It was also suggested that it may be possible to remedy this situation by taking this aspect into consideration in designing teaching materials and by making CC in the SL -linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge in interaction and communication- the goal of the ESL programme. Since at present, teaching materials generally tend to concentrate only on linguistic competence it was felt that what was needed was to take sociolinguistic competence into account in designing teaching materials. Unlike linguistic knowledge which could be taught and measured in terms of standard grammars, sociolinguistic knowledge is closely linked with CA, in being a linguistic manifestation of tacit culture conditioned conventions of a society. Therefore, it was suggested that the necessary improvement in the area of sociolinguistic competence could be brought about by promoting CA of the SL in the learners.

8.2.5. The Hypotheses Underlying this Proposal:

The hypotheses underlying these proposals were as follows:

1. In order to use the SL appropriately, learners need to acquire a degree of CC, which consists of both linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence: linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge.

2. One of the reasons for the unsatisfactory level of CC among even the more advanced learners, is due to their unsatisfactory level of sociolinguistic competence.

3. Sociolinguistic competence, and therefore CC is closely influenced by the culture that underlies a language because sociolinguistic conventions are a form of linguistic manifestation of underlying cultural awareness, and therefore, it is necessary to have a degree of CA in order to possess sociolinguistic competence and in turn CC.

4. Therefore, it is possible to improve CC in the SL by making

learners aware of the cultural features of the SL which underlie the sociolinguistic conventions and by bringing these sociolinguistic conventions to their notice both by conscious teaching and through exposure.

8.2.6. The Experiment:

In order to check the validity of the above hypotheses, and in order to investigate the possible effects that these hypotheses may have on ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, a teaching experiment using materials designed to increase the CA and the sociolinguistic competence of the ESL learners was undertaken. In order to check whether this teaching material was having any effect on the learners' CA and sociolinguistic competence and in turn on their CC, a pre test/post test design was selected to test their level of CC before and after the treatment. A revised version of a research test for testing CC designed by Bachman and Palmer (1982:449-465), was used as the instrument for both the pre test and the post test. The teaching materials were reviewed on the basis of the findings from the investigation and a sample set of teaching materials revised on the basis of this review.

8.3. Summary of Research Findings

The test results did not reach statistical significance to support the hypothesis that increased CA leads to improved CC, as the results of the experimental group who were taught using materials designed to improve their CA and sociolinguistic competence were not sufficiently better than the results of the control group who were not exposed to these materials.

However, the experiment did lead to some important findings:

1. Both the pre test and the post test revealed that sociolinguistic competence, involving CA was the most difficult across all groups of subjects.

2. Since their overall performance is affected by their poor performance in this area, this finding suggests that improvement in this area would lead to improved CC.

3. The CA and sociolinguistic conventions related lesson materials and most of the techniques used for introducing these materials and the activities based on these materials were successful in the classroom, as the learners responded positively to these materials and techniques.

4. The pre test post test design using the same test was not exactly suitable for this kind of experiment, because the subjects taking part in the experiment did not make an attempt to do their best at the post test when they discovered that they were being given the same test.

8.4. The Impact of the Findings on the Theoretical Concepts

On the surface, it seems that on the basis of the findings of this study, it would become necessary to discard the original hypothesis that increased CA contributed to increased sociolinguistic competence and in turn to improved CC. However, though it is not possible to uphold the hypothesis on the basis of the statistics, because of the findings outlined in Chapter 6 and in 8.3 above, the present writer feels that the importance of this hypothesis in relation to language teaching has not diminished, in that it is the research design and not the theoretical arguments underlying the investigation that need to be re-examined.

In relation to the experiment as a whole, there are certain questions that need to be asked and answered. Three of the most important ones are:

1. Was the research undertaking of the sort that would be reasonably expected to produce satisfactory results?
2. Is it possible to change attitudes and behaviours in adult learners, especially over a short period of time?
3. Was the research experiment in the form it was launched, the proper way to set about achieving a CC goal?
4. Is the research supported by the findings of other researchers?

It seems desirable to deal with these questions in turn.

8.4.1. Was the Research Undertaking Reasonable:

Judd (1983:236) gives voice to a feeling shared by all teachers involved in ESL/EFL when he says:

> 'Developing communicative abilities and teaching natural language are very difficult goals to accomplish.'

Any teacher who has been involved in trying to do this for years, with very

little success for all his/her hard work, would agree wholeheartedly with Judd's statement. If such were the case, to attempt what was attempted in this experiment; to bring about some degree of improvement in the CC of a group of learners through using materials and techniques that were novel to them, and within as short a period as 6 weeks, seems to be an ambitious undertaking. Though it does seem a rather futile attempt if represented in this light, there are certain arguments that can be advanced in defence of the convictions that led to the attempt being made.

To begin with, the researcher was not of the opinion that this experiment would be an unqualified success. But, under more favourable conditions the results too may have been more satisfactory.

If the research design did not have flaws of the type described in chapter 6, then, what was attempted does not seem unreasonable. The experiment was not an attempt to argue that these learners would rise from zero CC to perfect CC (if there is such a thing); what it was trying to suggest was, that by placing emphasis during the experiment on an area of CC that is normally neglected in ESL courses, it would be possible to see some degree of improvement in this area.

The reasons as to why the experiment failed to work the way it was envisaged, are discussed at length in Chapter 6. What is attempted here, is to try and outline why such an undertaking is justified even when it does seem to be futile because of the immensity of the undertaking.

Even though the investigation did not provide statistical evidence in support of the hypothesis that increased CA leads to improved CC, what the investigation did reveal about the hypothesis seems to indicate that this is due to flaws in the design of the experiment and in the instruments, and not due to the invalidity of the hypothesis. The research findings do show that sociolinguistic competence is what the learners lack most and therefore, that improvement in this area is likely to lead to increased CC.

8.4.2. Is it Possible to Change Attitudes and Behaviours of Learners:

In this research experiment, what was attempted basically was to try and change the attitude of the learners, that learning English means learning grammar and vocabulary, and to change their language behaviour in getting

them to think in terms of using language appropriate to different situations, different types of interaction etc. In the light of the results, the question arises whether this could really be done. The answer seems to be: not during a short period of time and certainly not in 6 weeks.

The subjects who took part in this experiment, and in fact the majority of learners who attend ESL classes at the tertiary level have already learnt English for several years, and got used to learning English and thinking about English classes in a particular way. To present materials and methods which in their eyes seem to go against what they associate with English classes and to change their attitude and behaviour in the course of 6 weeks is certainly not to be accomplished easily. Mosback's account of his experiences of English teaching in the schools in Sri Lanka, gives an idea of the sort of classroom activities that these learners are accustomed to:

> 'From a three month study all round Sri Lanka, it was clear that most teachers needed convincing even of the value of pupil-centred oral work, let alone pair and group work on a regular basis. Front-of-class, even 'sit down' teaching was the norm. With good discipline this style of teaching had often produced quite satisfactory results in the multiple choice, short answer and cloze type examinations. This kind of test has attempted to serve the aims of the reading/structure recognition course approach for three generations of secondary school pupils. However, it would not do for the communicative skills, especially speaking, which are now realized as vital in Sri Lanka's national and international life' (Mosback 1984:185).

As Mosback goes on to point out, children take to new approaches quite willingly, but understandably it is somewhat more difficult when it comes to young adults, who have been accustomed to the old system for a long time. Seeing that they have been accustomed to traditional methods of teaching, it is to the credit of the learners who took part in this experiment that they did respond as enthusiastically as they did to the new materials and the new techniques. But, it becomes necessary to make the point that to be successful, the sort of approach proposed in this thesis need to be introduced gradually and be spread over a longer period of time.

8.4.3. Is the Approach Advocated Here, the Most Suitable Way to Accomplish a CC Goal:

Even if it were possible to convince all those concerned, that CC was the most desirable goal in teaching ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka, *and* that in order to achieve this goal it is necessary to improve the learners' sociolinguistic competence, the question still remains as to the means whereby this goal is to be achieved. The means proposed in this thesis are making the learners more culturally aware in the SL and sociolinguistic features in class in order to improve their sociolinguistic competence, and thereby increase their CC. Support for this approach cannot be sought purely on the basis of the results of this experiment as they do not show that increased CA leads to increased CC. Is this then perhaps not the best way to achieve a CC goal? Many critics of a CA approach would hasten to agree, but the writer is convinced that the classrooms observations and other insights provided by the experiment (e.g the MCT results) indicate the validity of this hypothesis in spite of the failure of the statistical evidence.

What is important at this point, is to go back to the original proposal and reconsider what exactly making learners culturally aware and sociolinguistically competent entails. The theoretical justification for deciding on the need for such an approach is discussed at length in Chapter 4 of this thesis. What the writer intends doing here, is to recapitulate on what making learners culturally aware in relation to sociolinguistic competence means, in ESL terms.

As the texts and techniques amply illustrate, the materials used in this experiment could be made use of in ESL teaching even if CA and sociolinguistic competence had nothing to do with the teaching goal. In other words, though it is attempted to make the learners consciously aware of the SL culture and its sociolinguistic conventions, through these materials this is not the only focus. Most of the CA and sociolinguistic conventions as set out in these materials, are meant to be absorbed together with content information and also language skills. The learners listen to speech, discuss issues arising out of something they have heard/seen/experienced and compare features of a system different from their own that they have come across with features of the system they all know (all activities in which they are involved in normal day to day life). In doing all this, they are also being taught how to use their linguistic knowledge in addition to their sociolinguistic knowledge. In this way,

the teaching materials are not restricted to conveying sociolinguistic knowledge and CA, but also attempt to develop the learners procedural ability through skill development. Even a critic who is completely against a CA approach, would find no reason to object to these activities, and therefore, to materials that generate such activities.

The writer feels that, introducing culture material which forms the basis of such activities leads to the gaining of CA and sociolinguistic knowledge in the SL, while at the same time, providing opportunities through the activities for the development of procedural ability and language skills by making 'real use' of the SL in the classroom possible.

Another salient point is that the particular way in which the culture materials were introduced in this experiment had to do with the requirements of the experiment. The pre test/post test design required that one half of the subjects randomly selected should be exposed to CA materials, while the other half were exposed to their normal ESL materials which are generally grammar and vocabulary based. The writer has stressed right at the beginning, her conviction that CC as Hymes suggests consists of both linguistic competence *and* sociolinguistic competence, and that in order to be communicatively competent, it is necessary to be in possession of both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, in the normal ESL situation in which these ESL materials are meant to be used the emphasis will not be only on the teaching/learning of sociolinguistic rules and conventions.

In the normal ESL teaching situation the teaching material will not be limited to culture material as other text material too will be used. Similarly, the culture based materials will not only be limited to making learners aware of the sociolinguistic rules of language use. Just as much as a sample item such as a leaf, could be used in a primary class to make children aware of colour, texture, shape etc., culture materials could also be used for teaching any aspect such as grammar, vocabulary etc., in addition to sociolinguistic conventions of language use. Since the whole of education is bent on making people aware of not only what is near at hand, but also of things further afield, the writer sees no reason why an exception should be made in the case of a culture other than the learners' own, a culture which is associated with a language s/he is trying to learn. Whatever the arguments may be against a sociolinguistic competence through CA approach, the relationship between

culture and language and CA and sociolinguistic competence cannot be denied as research in various disciplines show. Finding the most suitable ways and means of achieving sociolinguistic competence in SL teaching would need a great deal of research, but the validity of the need is supported by the findings in this study as well as research findings elsewhere as discussed in 5.3.

Research described earlier (in chapters 4 & 5), in the fields of linguistics, sociology, anthropology, ethnography etc., show the way in which culture is inseparably linked with language use. In the narrower area of sociolinguistics, the relationship between grammatical and socio-cultural features in the use of language has been established by researchers in this field. Therefore, the present writer feels, that she is justified in her stand that making learners aware of the SL culture is a fruitful way in which sociolinguistic competence and thereby CC can be achieved in ESL.

8.5. Concluding Remarks

In undertaking this study, an attempt was made to investigate one area that would be of potential interest to the development and expansion of ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. Though the researcher's primary interest was ESL at the tertiary level, it was hoped that this research would benefit ESL in Sri Lanka in general. The research has not produced any results that would contribute in a spectacular way to the solution of the many problems of teaching ESL at the tertiary level in Sri Lanka. But it is hoped that this study, will give rise to other research in this area which would contribute to the development of ESL in Sri Lanka.

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Abbreviations

App.L	Applied Linguistics
ELTJ	English Language Teaching Journal
FLA	Foreign Language Annals
GURT	Georgetown University Round Table
IJSL	International Journal of the Sociology of Language
IRAL	International Review of Applied Linguistics
LL	Language Learning
MLJ	Modern Language Journal
SSLA	Studies in Second Language Acquisition
TQ	TESOL Quarterly
WPB	Working Papers in Bilingualism

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